NATION

70 rescued, over 50 missing after U'khand flash floods

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BUSINESS

TCS to increase wage of 80% employees from next month

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

AIFF proposes Super Cup before ISL in September

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Over 25 shots fired at Kapil's Canada café

SURREY, 7 AUG

Over 25 shots were reportedly fired at Indian comedian Kapil Sharma's Kap's Café in Surrey, Canada, marking the second such attack in under a month. According to Indo-Canadian Voice, a viral social media post, allegedly by gangster Goldy Dhillon and attributed to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, claimed responsibility. The post warned of future action in Mumbai, though no official verification has been made. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Pak Army Chief to visit US again

ISLAMABAD, 7 AUG

Pakistan Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir will visit the US this month—his second trip in two months — to attend the farewell of CENTCOM chief General Michael Kurilla. Kurilla, who retires soon, had praised Pakistan as a "phenomenal partner" in counter-terrorism, citing its role in capturing ISIS-K terrorists using US intelligence. His remarks, seen as a return to India-Pakistan hyphenation, irked New Delhi. Pakistan awarded Kurilla "Nishan-e-Imtiaz" during his visit. *—PTI*

EC stole 1L votes in B'luru: Rahul

He accuses EC of colluding with BJP to steal votes; Poll body demands written plaint

The guide to EC's 'vote chori'?

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi accused the Election Commission of enabling an "organised theft of votes" in Mahadevapura, Bengaluru. Backed by seven-foot-high stacks of printed voter rolls, Rahul tore into EC.

2024 LOK SABHA ELECTION – BENGALURU CENTRAL

Congress candidate Mansoor Ali Khan maintained a lead for most of the counting; the final results saw BJP's PC Mohan securing a narrow victory margin.

Mahadevapura result:

PC Mohan: 2,29,632 votes

Mansoor Ali Khan: 1,15,586 votes

RAHUL'S ALLEGATIONS:

Over 1,00,250 votes were manipulate through 5 methods of "Vote Chori". Here is one of them:

DUPLICATE VOTERS: 11,965 votes

Voter names appear multiple times in rolls.

Example 1: Gurkirat Singh Dang – appears in Booths 116, 124, 125, and 126.

Example 2: Aditya Shrivastav – Registered in Mahadevapura (Booths 458 & 459), also in Mumbai & Lucknow.

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

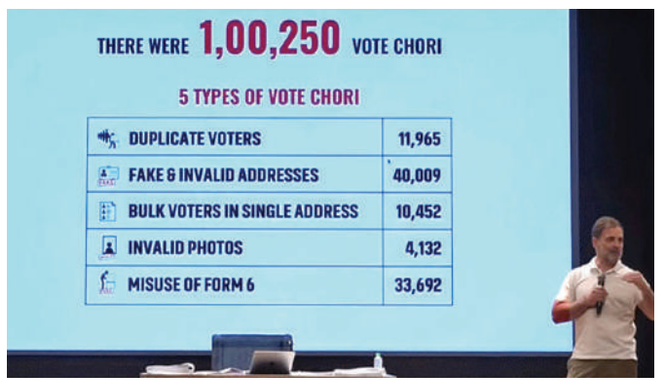
Congress leader and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Thursday dropped an "atom bomb" on the Election Commission claiming that over 1 lakh votes were "stolen" in a single Assembly segment in Karnataka during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Citing data from Mahadevapura, part of Bengaluru Central seat, Gandhi accused the EC of facilitating electoral fraud in collusion with BJP and called it a "crime against the Constitution".

At a press conference in Delhi, Gandhi presented an internal analysis of voter data from Mahadevapura.

Gandhi said BJP's PC Mohan secured 6,58,915 votes in the Bengaluru Central seat, winning with a margin of 32,707 against Congress's Mansoor Ali Khan. "In the Mahadevapura segment, the Congress received 1,15,586 votes, whereas BJP garnered 2,29,632 votes. Mahadevapura alone gave BJP a lead of 1,14,046 votes. We believe 1,00,250 of those were fraudulent."

"This is EC data. If 1 lakh fake voters exist in one segment, what's happening nationwide?" Gandhi asked, asserting that the same pattern was likely repeated in other constituencies. "This isn't just vote theft — it's an atom bomb on our democracy."


THERE WERE 1,00,250 VOTE CHORI
5 TYPES OF VOTE CHORI
DUPLICATE VOTERS 11,965
FAKE & INVALID ADDRESSES 40,009
BULK VOTERS IN SINGLE ADDRESS 10,452
INVALID PHOTOS 4,132
MISUSE OF FORM 6 33,692

At a press conference in Delhi, Rahul Gandhi presented an internal analysis of voter data from Mahadevapura in Bengaluru **PHOTO: PTI**

He accused the EC of obstructing scrutiny by refusing to share machine-readable voter rolls and allegedly destroying CCTV footage from polling stations. "They know if we do this analysis in other seats, the truth of Indian democracy will come out."

Rejecting a request from the Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer for a signed declaration, Gandhi said, "I made the statement publicly. Take it as an oath. They haven't denied the data — they're just dodging accountability."

He demanded judicial intervention, stating that the democracy "we love so much" no longer exists. "The Constitution rests on 'one person, one vote'. If that's not secured, democracy is gone," he said.

Gandhi will hold a protest rally and march to the Karnataka Election Commission Office at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Friday.

Meanwhile, CEO of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh asked Gandhi to submit a signed declaration with the names of ineligible people included in voter lists. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2 & 3

EC is no longer a watchdog: Randeep Singh Surjewala
>>>Read on Page 5

K'taka Cabinet clears Bill to liberate devadasis

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

The State Cabinet approval 17 Bills, including a Bill aimed at liberating oppressed devadasi women from all forms of exploitation and their children from social taboos through empowerment. All these Bills are likely to be tabled in the legislature and passed during the upcoming session from 11 August.

However, the cabinet deferred a decision on the Karnataka Rohith Vemula (Prevention of Exclusion or Injustice) (Right to Education and Dignity) Bill.

"The Karnataka Devadasi (Prevention, Prohibition, Relief And Rehabilitation) Bill, 2025 was approved by the Cabinet and it aims to conscientise society about the practice of dedicating women as devadasis," Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said on Thursday.

It intends to do away with the need for the father's name in application forms and official documents for children of devadasis, he said.

"If devadasi has a son, he can write his name and his surname or his mother's name, instead of father's name," he added. "Greater Bengaluru (Amendment) Bill, which has something to do with the State Election Commission to prepare voter list, was also approved," Patil said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Tariff war: PM cites farmers' interest; Lula & Bibi back India

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

In a message directed at US President Donald Trump, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that India will never compromise on the interests of its farmers, fishermen and dairy sector, and declared he was ready to bear a significant personal cost if necessary.

This came a day after Trump ratcheted up tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent, even as the two nations discuss a bilateral trade deal. The trade deal is stuck over the US demand for greater access to India's agricultural and dairy market. The US wants reduced tariffs on products such as corn, soybeans, apples and ethanol, as well as more access for US dairy products.

LULA CALLS MODI

Late evening, Modi received a call today from Brazil President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the duo talked about the agreed framework to strengthen trade, technology, energy, defence, agriculture and health ties. This comes just a day after Lula said he would rather call Modi and Chinese Premier amid the ongoing trade war.

TRUMP'S 'SECONDARY SANCTIONS'

Trump said India is "very close" to China in terms of its purchases of Russian oil and will pay tariffs of 50 per cent. Trump signed an executive order "Addressing Threats to the US by the Government of the Russian Federation" on Wednesday, slapping extra 25 per cent tariffs, which will come into effect on 27 August. On why he was singling India out, he said "it has only been eight hours, so let us see what happens over the next.... You are going to see so much secondary sanctions."

BIBI BACKS INDIA

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu backed India, asserting that Washington recognises India as a "solid partner." He said India "stands out in Asia" and added that India and US are "two terrific friends with so much common ground." He expressed optimism that the two "should be able to find a solution" to trade tensions. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2, 5, 6 & 7

SC bins Justice Varma's plea, clears deck for removal

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Observing that procedure was scrupulously followed, the Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma's plea seeking invalidation of an in-house inquiry report finding him guilty of misconduct in the cash discovery row.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and A G Masih said Justice Varma's conduct does not inspire confidence, a major upset for the judge at the centre of controversy since March when a huge cache of half-burnt cash was found following a fire in the storeroom of his official residence in Delhi.

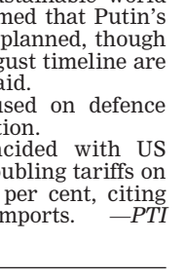
Justice Varma had also sought quashing of the 8 May recommendation by then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna urging Parliament to initiate impeachment proceedings against him.

The top court said the then CJI and the in-house committee scrupulously followed procedure except for uploading of the video footage and the photographs. "We have held that it was not required to upload the photos and videos of the fire-fighting operation on the SC website. But having said so, we have held that nothing turns on it, because at the opportune moment, you did not question it," Justice Datta said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

PUTIN MEETS DOVAL, TO VISIT INDIA SOON

MOSCOW, 7 AUG



National Security Adviser Ajit Doval met Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin on Thursday.

Earlier, Doval held discussions with Russian Security Council Secretary Sergey Shoigu, who reaffirmed Russia's commitment to deepening cooperation with India to build a more just and sustainable world order. Doval confirmed that Putin's India visit is being planned, though reports of a late-August timeline are incorrect, sources said.

Doval's visit focused on defence and energy cooperation.

Doval's trip coincided with US President Trump doubling tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent, citing India's Russian oil imports. *—PTI*

2 MINORS HELD IN ODISHA

Woman gangraped while relieving herself

BHUBANESWAR, 7 AUG

The Odisha Police have arrested three people, including two minors, for allegedly raping a woman when she was relieving herself in a forest in Angul district, an official said.

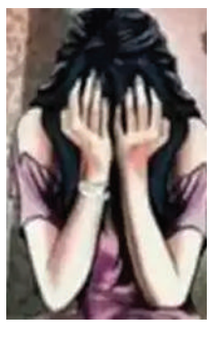
According to the police, the incident happened when the survivor, along with her nephew, was returning from Chhendipada on a motorcycle.

On the way, she went to a roadside jungle to relieve herself. At that time, three people came on a tractor and sexually assaulted her, the police said in a press statement on Wednesday.

Though the incident took place on July 3, the victim lodged a complaint with Bagdia police station on Tuesday.

The police registered a case and started an investigation.

"Three police teams were formed and they worked under the direct supervision of the SP to nab the accused persons," the police statement said.



Forensic team and dog squads were engaged in the investigation, and all three accused persons, including two minors, were arrested on Wednesday, it said. *—PTI*

De-addiction 'medicine' for alcohol kills 3

KALABURAGI, 7 AUG

Three persons died in Imadapur village of Sedam taluk on Wednesday evening after consuming a "herbal medicine to cure alcohol addiction". The condition of another person who consumed the same concoction is critical, and he is undergoing treatment at a hospital. The deceased have been identified as Lakshmi Narasimhalu, 45, of Burugapalli village of Sedam taluk, Ganesh Babu Rathod, 24, of Shahabad town and Nagesh Bhimashappa Gadagu, 25, of Madakal village. All of the victims had consumed a herbal concoction touted locally as a medicine that could cure alcohol addiction. However, it was proved wrong within a few hours of consuming the "medicine". Police have launched an investigation and are trying to find the source of the concoction —*Salar News*

₹ 18.5k traffic fines on bike DKS drove cleared

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

The traffic violation fine of Rs 18,500 amassed by a two-wheeler ridden by State's Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar during an inspection of the Hebbal flyover loop has been settled, police confirmed on Thursday. The vehicle's owner appeared in person at the RT Nagar Traffic Police Station on 6 August and paid the entire fine amount. The City Traffic Police reported that on 5 August, during the inspection, Shivakumar rode the two-wheeler, which had a total of 34 pending traffic violation cases. These violations included riding without a helmet, using a mobile phone while riding, and entering no-entry or one-way zones —*PTI*

HD Kote Cong urges action against ex-prez

MYSURU, 7 AUG

The HD Kote Block Congress Committee on Thursday urged District Congress President BJ Vijaykumar to take disciplinary action against former president of the State Bhovi Development Corporation, GV Seetharamu, over derogatory remarks made against the Vokkaliga community. At a meeting chaired by the Block Congress Committee President Aizaz Pasha and General Secretary Chamaraju, the committee stated the remarks hurt the sentiments of the community, adding that the statement may damage the party's prospects in the upcoming Taluk Zilla Panchayat polls. The committee urged for the suspension of Seetharamu. Thousands of members from the Vokkaliga community gathered in HD Kote and Saragur town to protest. —*Salar News*

Class 5 boy killed by seniors, body placed near school

VIJAYAPURA, 7 AUG

A Class 5 student who was beaten up by three Class 9 students allegedly for wearing a wrist watch to school was pronounced dead in the hospital on Thursday morning. The victims parents, Sunil and Shruti, placed his body in front of the school's main gate, where they protested against the management for remaining silent despite the escalation of the matter. Ansh and his family, who were immigrants from Bihar, were residing in Yogapur in Nagathana taluk of Vijayapura. The incident took place at an English medium school run by Sri Satya Saibaba Education Trust on 2 August. —*Salar News*

Cabinet clears 17 Bills; Rohit Vemula Bill held

Slew of benefits for minorities; Bills to be discussed on 11 Aug

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

The State Cabinet approval 17 Bills, including the Greater Bengaluru (Amendment) Bill. All these Bills are likely to be tabled in the legislature and passed during the upcoming session from 11 August.

The Cabinet cleared a Bill that aims to amend certain sections of the Land Revenue Act and Land Reforms Act.

The Cabinet also approved the Registration (A) Bill to ensure due diligence in public interest is undertaken by the Sub-Registrar at the time of registration of property, to integrate property software to prevent illegal registration of properties in urban areas and to simplify property registration.

The Cabinet also cleared Karnataka Compliance Decriminalisation Amendment of Provisions Bill aimed at decriminalising and rationalising offences to further enhance trust based governance for ease of living and doing business and the Karnataka Ports (Landing and Shipping Fees) (Amendment) Bill to revise the fees once in three year, and if fees are not revised once in three year, then, to give the power to Government to issue a notification to revise (increase or decrease) fees at such percentage.

The Cabinet has also agreed to remove the rule that non-Muslim minority educational institutions must have 50 per cent of students from the respective minority category, through an amendment to the Karnataka Educational Institutions (recognition of Minority Education Institution Terms and Conditions) (Technical Education) Rules, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said on Thursday.

Rohit Vemula **PHOTO: PTI**

- The Cabinet agreed to remove the rule that non-Muslim minority educational institutions must have 50 per cent of students from the respective minority category, through an amendment to the Karnataka Educational Institutions (recognition of Minority Education Institution Terms and Conditions) (Technical Education) Rules

However, the Cabinet deferred a decision on the Karnataka Rohith Vemula (Prevention of Exclusion or Injustice) (Right to Education and Dignity) Bill.

"We are yet to have one consultation meeting, that's why we have deferred it to the next meeting," the minister said.

The draft of the Rohith Vemula Bill, reportedly proposes compensation of up to Rs 1 lakh for students who face caste-based discrimination in higher education institutions, and a jail term of one year and a fine of Rs 10,000 for guilty.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had written to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in April, urging the State government to enact "Rohith Vemula Act" to ensure that no one faces caste-based discrimination in the education system.

Rohith Vemula, a Dalit student, allegedly died by suicide due to caste-based discrimination in Hyderabad, in 2016.

Administrative approval was given to purchase a total of 1,103 electric four-wheeled vehicles through Shri Devaraj Urs Development Corporation at an estimated cost of Rs 33.09 crores and distribute them through 11 corporations to enable unemployed people belonging to backward classes to start food kiosks.

Administrative approval was given for the revised estimate of Rs 87.60 crores for the construction of 15 women's college buildings for the education of minority girls in 15 districts of the State. —*PTI*

OTHER BILLS APPROVED BY CABINET

- Karnataka Souhardha (A) Bill
- Karnataka Essential Services Maintenance (Amendment) Bill
- Karnataka Conduct Of Government Litigation (Amendment) Bill
- Karnataka Municipalities And Certain Other Law (Amendment) Bill
- Karnataka Tourism Trade (Facilitation and Regulation) (A) Bill
- Municipal Corporation (A) Bill
- Karnataka Town and Country Planning and Certain Other Law (Amendment) Bill
- Karnataka Ground Water (Regulation for Protection of Sources of Drinking Water) Amendment) Bill
- Gadag-Betageri Business, Culture and Exhibition Authority (Amendment) Bill
- Karnataka Co-operative (A) Bill

SERENITY NOW

School children have a gala time during the inauguration of the flower show at Lalbagh, in Bengaluru, on Thursday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

CM slams Modi's 'headline management' amid huge US tariffs

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said US President Donald Trump's 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods was an "economic blackmail", blaming it on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on "headline management".

Targeting the Centre, Siddaramaiah alleged that the Modi government had repeatedly ignored "prescient warnings" by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, and called on the Prime Minister to "grow up and act in India's interest."

Gandhi described Trump's move as an attempt to bully India into an unfair trade deal.

Siddaramaiah wrote on X, "Rahul Gandhi called them out early. The BJP mocked him, but he was proven right again and again."

He also cited Modi's outreach to Elon Musk despite Musk's proximity to Trump.

"But Trump wasn't impressed. He saw it not as diplomacy, but surrender," Siddaramaiah alleged. "He (Trump) did exactly what a true friend wouldn't: claimed 33 times that he brokered peace between India and Pakistan and backed Israel's brutal assault on Gaza."

CM INAUGURATES LALBAGH FLOWER SHOW

Siddaramaiah inaugurated Lalbagh Flower Show 2025, saying the event is a tribute to Kittur Rani Channamma and Sangolli Rayanna, who fought bravely against British rule.

He also announced that 110 acres of land will be set aside at the place where Rayanna was hanged.

Responding to the BJP's criticism of the transport strike, he called Opposition Leader R Ashoka a "chameleon".

"When in power, a facade of drama; when in Opposition, chameleon's drama..! When in power, a mask of composure; when in Opposition, a rage..!" the CM said. "Weren't you the Transport Minister when the transport employees first went on strike for salary revision?"

He alleged that during the BJP regime, transport employees faced unprecedented hardships, including delayed salary payments where "half the salary of transport employees was paid one month and the other half the next month." —*PTI*

CASTE CENSUS REPORT HANDED OVER TO CABINET

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

Justice HN Nagmohan Das Commission report aimed at providing internal reservation among Scheduled Castes (SCs), was on Thursday placed before the Karnataka cabinet, which decided to discuss and take a decision on it at a special meeting on August 16.

The commission, headed by retired judge of the Karnataka High Court Nagmohan Das, submitted the 1,766-page report to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on 4 August.

"Justice Das Commission has submitted the report after a scientific survey in a short period of time. 92 per cent of the community's population has been covered in the survey. The report was placed before the Cabinet and all the ministers have been given a copy of it," Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said. "After studying it, on 16 August (Saturday), a Special Cabinet meeting will be held." —*PTI*

'SAY IT UNDER OATH'

Share names that were wrongly included: State EC

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) asked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to share the names of electors he claimed were either included or excluded wrongfully from the voters' list of the State along with a signed declaration for the poll authorities to initiate "necessary proceedings" in the matter.

Election Commission sources said Gandhi should either sign a declaration under the Conduct of Election Rules and submit the list of people who he claims were either wrongfully included or removed from the voters' list or he should "stop misleading" the people of India and "stop making baseless allegations" against the poll authority.

In a letter to Gandhi after he levelled allegations of vote fraud, the State poll officer said that during a press conference in the national capital, "you had mentioned about the inclusion of ineligible electors and exclusion of eligible electors in the Electoral Rolls. You are kindly requested to sign and return the enclosed declaration/oath under Rule 20(3)(b) of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, along with the name(s) of such elector(s) so that necessary proceedings can be initiated."

EC functionaries here said the State CEO is expecting a signed declaration from Gandhi by this evening.

Gandhi hit back, saying he signed a declaration and had made the remarks publicly.

They can "take it as an oath," he said. "I am a politician, what I say to the people is my word.... Interestingly, they haven't denied the information."

BJP HITS BACK

PC Mohan, MP of the Bangalore Central constituency said that Gandhi drops an "atom bomb" of allegations, but can't produce a single explosive proof.

Gandhi has insulted the people of Bangalore Central, especially thousands of Hindus who voted for the BJP, the MP said, "To him, any minority-heavy seat must belong to Congress."

"Gandhi is alleging 1,00,250 votes were stolen in Mahadevapura, a Hindu-dominated seat, not in Shivajinagar, which is minority-dominated. When Hindus vote BJP, it's called fraud. When minorities vote Congress, it's called secularism," he said.

Meanwhile, Mysuru BJP President and former MLA L Nagendra said that the Congress is raking up the issue to divert from its failures.

He also criticised KPCC spokesperson M Lakshaman for claiming that there was a vote theft in Mysuru. Lakshman had lost the last polls from to BJP's Yaduveer KC Wadiyar.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

A BREWERY HAS 68 VOTERS; 1BHK HAS 80

Rahul Gandhi cited four other methods of "Vote Chori"

FAKE & INVALID ADDRESSES: 40,009 VOTES

Types of invalid addresses:

- Address does not exist.
- Symbols like "0", "-", "#" used in house numbers.
- Addresses unverifiable or misleading.

BULK VOTERS AT SINGLE ADDRESS: 10,452 VOTES

- **Example 1:** House No. 35, a small single-bedroom had over 80 registered voters. Upon verification, none of them lived there or even existed.
- **Example 2:** 153 Biere Club, a well-known brewery in Whitefield, had 68 voters registered as residents, despite being a commercial establishment with no residential occupancy.

INVALID PHOTOS IN ELECTORAL ROLL: 4,132 VOTES

- Blurry, micro-sized, or unidentifiable photos used.
- Raises questions about identity verification.

MISUSE OF FORM 6: 33,692 VOTES

- Form 6 is used for new voter registration or address changes.
- Allegation: Used to duplicate or fake voters.

Example:

- Shakun Rani, aged 70
- Registered twice in 2 months using slightly altered photos
- Both entries reportedly voted

CM promises action against culprits for Dharmasthala clashes

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said that action will be taken in accordance with the law against those responsible for the clashes near Dharmasthala on 6 August.

The CM said, "Whoever has committed a wrong, action will be taken in accordance with the law."

Police have registered two FIRs. One pertains to the alleged assault on a group of YouTubers and damage caused to their two vehicles. The same complaint also includes an alleged assault on a reporter of a private news channel.

A second case has been registered for unlawful assembly in three locations: Pangala near Dharmasthala, where police resorted to a lathi charge, within the premises of the Dharmasthala police station, and in front of a local hospital.

Four men, representing three YouTube channels, including a cameraman, were attacked by a mob near Dharmasthala, when they were interviewing a person, amid an ongoing probe by SIT into the alleged mass burial case, police said. The incident occurred close to the residence of Soujanya, who was raped and found dead in 2012.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court will hear on Friday a plea challenging the Karnataka High Court's quashing of a media gag around the case. —*PTI*

FALSE PROMISES

Driver dies by suicide; BJP MP booked

C'BALLAPURA, 7 AUG

A 35-year-old contract driver, M Babu, employed by the Zilla Panchayat in Chikkaballapura died by suicide on Thursday morning, allegedly hanging himself from a tree at the Deputy Commissioner's office premises. Police stated that a suicide note named BJP MP K Sudhakar and two others.

The other men are Nagesh and Manjunath. Nagesh's father-in-law was reportedly a former JD(S) taluk panchayat president and joined the BJP after Sudhakar. The deceased claimed that they were both Sudhakar's aides.

Based on the complaint of deceased's wife, the three were booked under relevant sections of the BNS, including abetment to suicide and the relevant sections under the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Superintendent of Police Kushal Chouksey said Babu had been with the Zilla Panchayat for six to seven years and was assigned to the Chief Accounts Officer. Babu was from the Dalit community.

The note allegedly states that Nagesh and the accounts assistant "cheated him of several lakhs of rupees", claiming they could help him secure a government job "using the MP's influence"

In response, Sudhakar said, "I have never seen or met this person, Babu, in my public life.... I don't know (Nagesh and Manjunath)."

Following the incident, several Dalit organisations and Congress workers protested in Chikkaballapura.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-

KSRTC issues notices to 8,000 employees for strike

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has issued show-cause notices to approximately 8,000 employees for participating in a strike on 5 August, which defied the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), 1981. Across four state-run transport corporations, nearly 17,000 notices were issued on 6 August, officials confirmed.

The strike was organised by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Road Transport Corporation (RTC) employees, who commenced an indefinite protest at 6am on 5 August. While City experienced minimal disruption with full bus operations, substantial service interruptions occurred in the rest of Karnataka, resulting in an overall operational efficiency of 71.9 per cent .

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy defended the issuance of notices, saying it was routine procedure when employees neglect duty despite ESMA being enforced. "This is not unique to our department... if ESMA is in effect and employees take part in a strike, notices are issued". —*Agencies*

M'rashtra govt halts release of 'Khalid Ka Shivaji'

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

The Maharashtra government has urged the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to halt the 8 August release of Marathi film 'Khalid Ka Shivaji' and direct the censor board to re-examine its certification. The move follows a complaint from right-wing activist Nilesh Bhise, who claims the trailer contains historically inaccurate and offensive dialogue. Officials warn the film could incite law and order issues. The film, about a Muslim boy's admiration for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, has faced protests. Congress accused the BJP-led state government of yielding to right-wing pressure and distorting Shivaji's inclusive legacy. Congress asserts Shivaji built a mosque for Muslim soldiers, affirming the pluralistic ethos the film seeks to portray. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

SC releases Karti's Rs 1 cr deposit for foreign travel

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the release of Rs 1 crore deposited by Congress MP Karti P Chidambaram in 2022 as a condition for travelling abroad. The court approved his 2023 application, noting that Karti had returned to India as promised and surrendered his passport to the investigating officer. The court directed that the deposited amount, along with accrued interest, be refunded within a week. Karti, son of former finance minister P Chidambaram, is an accused in several cases, including the Aircel-Maxis and INX Media matters. He has been granted bail in both cases. The deposit was earlier mandated by the court to permit his international travel. *—PTI*

Stalin leads march on Karunanidhi's death anniversary

CHENNAI, 7 AUG

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President MK Stalin led a silent march in Chennai on Thursday to mark the seventh death anniversary of former CM and party patriarch M Karunanidhi. Senior leaders, ministers, and hundreds of party workers joined the march at Karunanidhi's Marina Beach memorial, which was adorned with vibrant flowers. Slogans praising the late leader's legacy echoed through the gathering. Stalin also launched two initiatives in his memory: the Kalaignar Nidhinalgai Thittam to support young Dravidian scholars, and the Kalaignar Student Journalists Scheme, a collaboration between party daily Murasoli and Kalaignar Seithigal, aimed at encouraging student journalism in line with the Dravidian ideals. *—PTI*

Haryana hospitals suspend Ayushman Bharat services

CHANDIGARH, 7 AUG

The Haryana chapter of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has announced the suspension of Ayushman Bharat scheme services in the state, citing unpaid dues owed to empanelled hospitals. The IMA, representing nearly 650 private hospitals, warned the government about halting treatments if delays continued. IMA Secretary Dhirender K Soni stated, "The government itself admits that Rs 490 crore in dues are pending. By the time they will disperse this amount, the pendency will keep on increasing. What will private hospitals do? How can they sustain if they do not get reimbursements on time?" Despite Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Sudhir Rajpal assurances regarding the matter, IMA finds the government's response insufficient and fears for patients relying on the scheme. *—PTI*

RaGa: EC colluded with BJP to rig M'rashtra polls

BJP calls his remarks calculated deceit, insult to the democracy

NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI, 7 AUG

LICATE VOTERS: 11,965 VOTERS
SAME VOTER APPEARS MULTIPLE TIMES IN VOTER ROLLS
Booth Number: 116
Booth Number: 124
Booth Number: 123
Booth Number: 126

LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi addresses a press conference, at AICC HQ, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

> **BJP won 25 Lok Sabha seats with a margin of less than 33,000 votes. This is why the EC is not giving us the digital voter rolls. Modi only needed to steal 25 seats to stay in power in 2024** -Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Election Commission (EC), alleging fraud in the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly polls and claiming the results were "stolen" to benefit the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance. The BJP hit back, calling his remarks "calculated deceit" and an insult to Indian democracy.

Gandhi raised doubts over the stark contrast in the INDIA bloc's performance in the state, sweeping 30 out of 48 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, but failing to cross 50 seats in the Assembly polls just five months later.

"BJP doesn't suffer anti-incumbency? Opinion polls showed something else, but the results flipped. Haryana, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh are examples," he said, adding that narratives like "Ladli Behna", Pulwama, and "Operation Sindoor" were pushed to justify the outcome.

He accused the EC of scheduling a "choreographed" election timeline and pointed to an unusual spike in voter numbers — over 1 crore new voters added in just five months, more than in five years.

Gandhi said his party's booth agents reported no such brisk voting to explain the turnout spike post 5.30pm, contradicting EC's claims.

He further alleged that the EC refused to share machine-readable voter rolls and chose to destroy CCTV footage that could have clarified last-minute voting surges.

"The voter list is the property of this country. The EC refuses to give it to us. That, along with the destroyed CCTV footage, raises serious suspicion," he said.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis ridiculed Gandhi's remarks, saying, "Maybe he should get his brain checked. Either his brain has been stolen or the chip is missing. That's why he makes such statements."

Later in the night, around 50 senior INDIA bloc leaders attended a dinner where Rahul presented "Democracy Destroyed" report, highlighting alleged booth-level fraud. The bloc agreed to march to the ECI on 11 August and finalise their Bihar campaign. *—PTI*

ROW OVER 2 EPIC NUMBERS

Authorities faulting me for their own mistake: Tejashwi

PATNA, 7 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Wednesday charged election authorities in Patna with "faulting him for their own mistake" by sending him a notice on having two EPIC numbers.

The former Bihar deputy chief minister also claimed that "a good reply" was being drafted for the notice, which would "leave them with nothing to say".

"I have received a notice from the Patna district administration.....Whose lapse is it if two EPIC numbers have been issued in my name?" said Yadav.

An online search of his EPIC number in the draft electoral rolls had yielded the result "no records found".

Claiming that many influencial people's names were struck off in the draft rolls, Yadav had cast serious doubts on the efficacy of the mammoth exercise which, was "an attempt to help the ruling BJP-led NDA in the upcoming assembly elections in the state".

The Patna district administration shared a screenshot of a portion of the draft electoral rolls in which names and photographs of Tejashwi, his father Lalu Prasad, the RJD President were present. It said that the EPIC number was the same as the one stated by the leader in his own affidavit in the 2020 elections.

- The Patna district administration shared a screenshot of a portion of the draft electoral rolls in which names and photographs of Tejashwi, his father Lalu Prasad, the RJD President were present

The sub-divisional magistrate of Patna (Sadar) issued a letter asking Tejashwi to "hand over for thorough investigation" the voter ID card which was "not issued officially". *—PTI*

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

Parliament passes Coastal Shipping Bill

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Parliament has successfully passed The Coastal Shipping Bill, 2025, with Rajya Sabha approving it during continued protests from Opposition MPs who demanded a discussion on Bihar's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Union Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal stated, "The Bill would reduce the compliance burden for Indian ships in line with the concept of 'ease of doing business' and ensure supply chain security for the country." The Bill aims to consolidate and amend laws governing coastal shipping, promote coasting trade, and encourage domestic participation, ensuring that India has a coastal fleet owned and operated by its citizens for national security & commercial needs.

Territorial waters extend up to 12 nautical miles from coast, with adjoining maritime zones up to 200 nautical miles.

Earlier, Lok Sabha passed The Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which seeks to implement decisions made by the GST Council. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman explained, "If it doesn't pass now, the state will have difficulty in implementing the amendments." *—PTI*

2.4K flights cancelled, rescheduled in 2025

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Civil Aviation Ministry revealed that 2,458 flights were cancelled or rescheduled this year due to regulatory and geopolitical issues. Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol noted that airlines face costs from delays and cancellations, which include additional fuel, maintenance, and rebooking expenses. Domestic airline passenger numbers saw a 7.34 per cent increase in January-June 2025, with 1,017 IndiGo flights and 662 Air India flights affected. *—PTI*

Didi questions EC for suspending 4 officers

KOLKATA, 7 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed strong support for state employees following the Election Commission's (EC) directive to suspend four officers for alleged lapses in electoral roll preparation.

The EC's orders, which include the suspension of two Electoral Registration Officers and two Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, have sparked a political debate ahead of the state's assembly elections in mid-2026.

Speaking at a welfare scheme event, Banerjee questioned the EC's actions, stating, "We all know that the EC can take action only from the date of announcement of elections."

She accused the Commission of attempting to intimidate officials and alleged a conspiracy aimed at deleting genuine voters from the rolls.

Banerjee also addressed the plight of Bengali-speaking migrant workers, who she claimed are facing discrimination in BJP-ruled states.

"Is it a crime to speak in one's own mother tongue?" she asked, condemning the negative portrayal of Bengali speakers as illegal immigrants.

Meanwhile, Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee accused the EC of compromising its neutrality.

He stated, "Now the EC has taken a shameless role to snatch the voting rights of genuine voters." *—PTI*

Deported migrant worker's father moves HC

KOLKATA, 7 AUG

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Amid an escalating political climate surrounding the purported persecution of Bengali-speaking migrant workers in BJP-ruled states, the father of a 19-year-old man from Malda, West Bengal, has petitioned the Calcutta High Court to secure the return of his son, Amir Sheikh.

The family claims Amir was unlawfully detained by Rajasthan Police and subsequently deported to Bangladesh, labelled an "illegal immigrant."

Jiyem Sheikh filed a habeas corpus petition, asserting his son showed valid identification, including an Aadhaar Card and birth certificate.

Samirul Islam, chairman of the West Bengal Migrant Welfare Board, stated on X, "He is neither a Rohingya nor a Bangladeshi national... His family holds land records dating back to the pre-Independence era."

Similar cases have emerged from others in Bengal, raising concerns over alleged forced deportations based on citizenship status. *—PTI*

ED can't act like a crook: SC on low convictions

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Supreme Court of India emphasised that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) must act within the law, rather than "like a crook," amid concerns over the agency's low conviction rates. A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan, and N Kotiswar Singh was reviewing appeals against a 2022 ruling that upheld the ED's powers under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Justice Bhuyan highlighted the agency's troubling statistics, stating, "Of the 5,000 cases registered by the ED in the past five years, there were less than 10 per cent convictions." He warned, "At the end of 5-6 years of judicial custody, if people are acquitted, who will pay for this?"

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju attributed the low rates to the delaying tactics of "influential crooks," but Justice Kant advocated for dedicated PMLA courts to expedite trial processes. Raju dismissed the review petitions.

The court also raised concerns on ED's arrest methodologies, insisting on transparency for the accused. *—PTI*

EC issues notification for VP polls, 3 rejected

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Election Commission has announced that the Vice Presidential election will be held on 9 September, following the resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar on 21 July due to health reasons. Although his term was to end in August 2027, the Constitution allows a full five-year term for a mid-term successor.

RS Secretary General PC Mody, received three nomination papers, which were rejected for not being in order. Nominations close on 21 August, scrutiny is on 22 August, and withdrawal deadline is 25 August.

The VP is elected by Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members, including nominated ones, via secret ballot using single transferable vote system. NDA authorised PM Narendra Modi and BJP Chief JP Nadda to select alliance's candidate. *—PTI*

J&K bans 25 books for 'glorifying terrorism'

SRINAGAR, 7 AUG

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered the forfeiture of 25 books, citing them as promoting false narratives, secessionism, and glorifying terrorism. The banned titles include works by prominent authors such as Maulana Maududi, Arundhati Roy, AG Noorani, Victoria Schofield, and David Devadas.

The Home Department stated that the literature distorts historical facts, vilifies security forces, and fosters radicalisation and violence among youth. Citing Sections 152, 196, 197 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 98 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, the government said these publications threaten India's sovereignty and integrity.

Titles such as Azadi, Kashmir in Conflict, and The Kashmir Dispute were among those listed. Critics argue the move curbs academic freedom, while officials claim it's necessary for national security and public order. *—PTI*

J&K ANTI-TERROR OP

7 days of no sleep: Locals call for relocation

SRINAGAR, 7 AUG

The women and children in the area are terrified and are developing psychological problems, a villager said PHOTO: PTI

Amidst the ongoing anti-terror operation in Kulgam entering its seventh day on Thursday, locals from the Akhal village have called for their relocation from the area, citing severe hardships.

The residents claimed they were unable to sleep due to the relentless firing and were running out of food.

"We have been facing severe difficulties for the past seven days. There is a shortage of ration and medicine in our homes now," Mubarak Khanday, a villager.

The women and children in the area are terrified, developing 'psychological problems', he added.

Even the nomadic population in the area was running out of food grains.

However, locals were grateful to village officials like the numberdar and the chowkidar for taking care of the village.

Sheikh Mehboob, a village official, urged the government to address the ration shortage and provide drinking water in the village.

He thanked the deputy commissioner and the SSP for making arrangements for an ambulance for the locals.

The counter-terror operations were launched in the forests of the Akhal area on 1 August following a tip-off about the presence of terrorists in the area.

Three security force personnel were injured in a fresh gunfight on Thursday as the anti-terror operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district entered the seventh day, the longest so far this year.

Two terrorists have been killed in the encounter which began on 2 August after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in a forest area at Akhal in the south Kashmir district. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Punjab women's panel pulls up Aujla, Honey Singh

CHANDIGARH, 7 AUG

The Punjab State Commission for Women has taken suo motu notice of allegedly objectionable lyrics in recent songs by singers Karan Aujla and Yo Yo Honey Singh. The songs, MF Gabru and Millionaire, are accused of using derogatory language against women. Commission chairperson Raj Lali Gill has written to the Punjab DGP, urging an immediate investigation. Both singers were summoned to appear before the commission on 11 August. The panel cited its powers to act on violations of women's rights and dignity. A status report from the police has also been requested ahead of the hearing, as the panel treats such issues with utmost seriousness. *—PTI*

Vehicle falls into nallah; 3 CRPF jawans killed

JAMMU, 7 AUG

Three Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel died and 15 were injured when their vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a nallah in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Thursday morning. The incident occurred around 10.30am in the Kadwa area as 23 personnel from the 187th battalion were returning from an operation in Basant Garh. Two died at the scene; another succumbed to injuries in hospital. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Union Minister Jitendra Singh expressed condolences and directed officials to provide the best possible care to the injured. Singh confirmed Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai is monitoring the situation, and praised local residents for assisting with rescue efforts. *—PTI*

'Rapist' Malayalam rapper's location monitored

KOCHI, 7 AUG

Police in Kochi are monitoring the whereabouts of Malayalam rapper Vedan (real name Hirandas Murali), who has been accused of repeatedly raping a lady doctor between 2021 and 2023. An FIR was registered at the Thrikkakara Police Station. Kochi Police Commissioner Putta Vimaladitya confirmed Vedan is not absconding and has filed for anticipatory bail in the Kerala High Court. Investigations, including witness questioning and evidence collection, are ongoing. The complainant also mentioned financial dealings with Vedan. Previously, the rapper was arrested in a drug case and for illegal possession of a leopard tooth. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Man disturbs lion eating its prey in Gujarat; held

BHAVNAGAR, 7 AUG

A man has been arrested in Gujarat's Bhavnagar district for harassing a lion by approaching it dangerously close while it was feeding on a cattle carcass. A viral video showed the man, identified as Gautam Shiyal, filming the lion on his phone as it ate. When he got too close, the lion charged at him, prompting others nearby to shout and distract the animal. The man continued filming before backing away. The Shetrunji Wildlife Division identified the location near Talli village and arrested Shiyal under the Wildlife Protection Act. A court rejected his bail plea and sent him to jail. Harassment of wildlife is a serious offence. *—PTI*

70 rescued, over 50 missing after U'khand flash floods

Army, aid agencies provide relief in Dharali and Harsil

DEHRADUN, 7 AUG

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami meets people rescued from disaster-affected areas and brought to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police camp at Matli in Uttarkashi on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

As rescue operations in the flash floods-ravaged Uttarkashi entered the third day on Thursday, 70 people have been rescued so far with over 50 are missing.

Four people were killed in the disaster that struck the ecologically fragile area on 5 August.

65 people who were stranded at different locations were airlifted to Matli town.

Efforts were also stepped up to airlift advanced equipment to the worst-hit Dharali village to search for those trapped under the rubble.

The Indian Army along with other authorities, ramped up Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations in Dharali and Harsil. The region remains cut off due to multiple landslides and road breaches.

70 civilians were rescued and over 50 are missing, including nine Army personnel.

Nine Army personnel and three civilians were evacuated to Dehradun by helicopter. Three critically injured civilians were shifted to AIIMS Rishikesh and eight were admitted to the Uttarkashi district hospital.

The military helipad in Harsil and another in Nelong are operational and connected by road to Gangotri.

Chinook and Mi-17 helicopters are waiting at the Dehradun airport and are likely to commence evacuation of civilians.

180-200 tourists stranded in Gangotri are being provided food, shelter, and medical support by the Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

"We were asleep when the flash floods hit. Everything around our homestay was washed away and the debris had come up to our window on the second floor," Bhupendra Singh Mehta, one of the rescued.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who is camping in Uttarkashi, interacted with some of those rescued hailing from different parts of the country.

Efforts are on to rescue 300-400 people stranded on different locations due to block roads.

Ground penetrating radars and sniffer dogs were deployed. *—PTI*

Justice Varma cash discovery: A timeline of events

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma's plea for invalidating a SC-appointed in-house inquiry panel's report, which found him guilty of misconduct.

A SERIES OF EVENTS THAT HAVE UNFOLDED IN THE CASE SO FAR:

- **15 March:** Delhi High Court officials inspect the place of incident.
- **17 March:** Delhi HC CJ Justice meets then CJI Sanjiv Khanna.
- **20 March:** Delhi HC CJ shares photos, videos with CJI.
- **22 March:** Justice Varma refutes allegations. Three-member enquiry committee constituted. SC uploads an in-house inquiry report.
- **28 March:** Justice Varma transferred to parent Allahabad HC.
- **3 May:** SC panel holds the judge guilty of misconduct, recommends removal.
- **8 May:** CJI writes to President Droupadi Murmu, PM Narendra Modi seeking Justice Varma's impeachment.
- **17 July:** Justice Varma moves SC seeking invalidation of the in-house inquiry panel's report.
- **7 Aug:** SC junks Justice Varma's plea.

A fire broke out on 14 March at the judge's official bungalow in Delhi's 30 Tughlak Crescent, leading to the discovery of wads of burnt cash.

Odisha self-immolation: Police officer transferred

The officer refused to register a complaint regarding threats made by the deceased's ex-boyfriend PHOTO: PTI

KENDRAPARA, 7 AUG

The Odisha Police have transferred an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) following allegations from the father of a young woman who self-immolated, claiming the officer had previously refused to register a complaint regarding threats made by the deceased's ex-boyfriend. The 19-year-old student died on Wednesday, with her father asserting that had the police acted when he approached them six months ago, his daughter may have been saved.

Kendrapara Superintendent of Police Siddharth Kataria announced the transfer of ASI Sailendra Mohan Palei from the Pattamundai (Rural) police station to the district headquarters to facilitate a transparent investigation. "As per the preliminary investigation, it appears to be a suicide case," Kataria stated, confirming that the body has been sent for a proper inquest.

Palei, however, denied the father's claims, asserting, "I did not receive any FIR, and the woman's father had never come to our police station." Notably, this incident marks the third case of a woman dying from burn injuries in Odisha since 12 July, igniting a political backlash against Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's government over such tragedies. *—PTI*

Bandh by BJD hits normal life in Odisha

PURI, 7 AUG

Normalcy was disrupted in Puri district due to a six-hour bandh called by the opposition BJD, demanding justice for a 15-year-old girl who succumbed to burn injuries. The girl, allegedly set on fire by three unidentified men near her home on 19 July, died on 2 August at AIIMS-Delhi.

Protesters blocked roads and ignited tires, demanding accountability for rising crimes against women.

The girl's mother initially claimed that three individuals were responsible, but her father later suggested she took her own life due to distress, prompting accusations of police cover-up.

Mohanty assured that vehicles carrying devotees for 'darshan' were allowed to pass and essential services continued uninterrupted. *—PTI*

Odisha man killed, buried in forest over 'witchcraft'

BHUBANESWAR, 7 AUG

A man has been allegedly murdered by villagers in Odisha's Gajapati district on suspicion of practising witchcraft. The victim, 45-year-old Karunakar Dalai, a quack, was reported missing after being called to a village meeting in Kusumpur on 28 July. "When I enquired, I was told that the villagers beat him," stated his sister-in-law, Sabita.

Gajapati SP Jatindra Kumar Panda said the villagers were angered by the death of a boy who had received herbal treatment from Karunakar. "A group of 10 to 12 people beat Karunakar to death and buried his body in a nearby jungle," Panda said. His body was discovered on Thursday, leading to the detention of eight suspects. *—PTI*

Kapil's Canada café attacked for 2nd time in a month

SURREY, 7 AUG

Over 25 shots were reportedly fired at Indian comedian Kapil Sharma's Kap's Café in Surrey, Canada, marking the second such attack in a month.

A viral social media post, allegedly shared by gangster Goldy Dhillon and attributed to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, claimed responsibility for the attack.The post warned of future action in Mumbai, though no official verification has been made.

Surrey Police have yet to issue a statement on the latest firing. The attack follows a July incident when several rounds were fired at the same café days after it opened. At least 10 bullet holes were found in a window, though no injuries were reported. Staff were present at the cafe.

The building includes retail units and residential apartments, a multi-faith centre and unopened businesses. During the previous attack, police cordoned off the Newton neighbourhood.

Babbar Khalsa International terrorist Harjit Singh Laddi had claimed responsibility for the 10 July shooting, citing hurt sentiments over remarks made at Sharma's show about Nihang Sikhs' traditional attire and conduct. *—ANI*

Tribal girl raped in Odisha; 3 held

BARIPADA, 7 AUG

Odisha Police have apprehended three individuals, including a minor, in connection with the persistent sexual assault of an 11-year-old girl over a month in Mayurbhanj district. Among those arrested is the survivor's brother-in-law.

The arrests occurred on Wednesday following an FIR lodged by the girl's mother at Khunta police station on 3 August, alleging that her daughter had been raped at various locations between 14 June and 27 July. The minor suspect was placed in a Child Protection Home in Rourkela, while the two adult suspects were remanded to judicial custody.

"The medical examinations of both the survivor and the accused were conducted, and the girl's statement was recorded in the presence of a magistrate," stated Panchanan Mohanty, inspector-in-charge of Khunta police station. The accused face charges under multiple sections of the BNS and POCSO Act. *—PTI*

DOORSTEP CHECKS ON

Four diagnosed in MP with Guillain-Barre Syndrome

MANDSAUR, 7 AUG

Four people have been diagnosed with Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a rare neurological disorder, in Multanpura village, Mandsaur district, Madhya Pradesh, officials confirmed on Thursday.

Mandsaur Collector Aditi Garg said seven suspected cases had been reported, with four confirmed. Health teams have launched a door-to-door survey to identify further cases. GBS causes the immune system to attack the nerves, leading to muscle weakness, tingling, and in some cases, paralysis.

Some affected individuals are reportedly receiving treatment in Ahmedabad and Indore. Their medical records are being reviewed to trace the source of infection.

Earlier this year, nearly 200 GBS cases were reported in Maharashtra's Pune district and a few in Mumbai. *—PTI*

- Mandsaur Collector Aditi Garg said seven suspected cases had been reported, with four confirmed. Health teams have launched a door-to-door survey to identify further cases

HC stays action against actor Shwetha Menon

KOCHI, 7 AUG

The Kerala High Court has stayed proceedings against Malayalam actress Shwetha Menon over an FIR accusing her of sharing obscene scenes from past films and adverts. Justice VG Arun, hearing Menon's plea to quash the FIR, noted that procedural requirements such as a police report or court inquiry appear to have been skipped before forwarding the complaint. The court directed the registry to seek a report from the Ernakulam Chief Judicial Magistrate.

Menon argued the allegations surfacing after she filed her nomination for AMMA president. *—PTI*

HC seeks land rights proof of people evicted in Assam

GUWAHATI, 7 AUG

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

The Gauhati High Court has given residents facing eviction from Assam's Doyang and South Nambar reserve forests in Golaghat district 10 days to submit proof of land rights or vacate.

Chief Justice Ashutosh Kumar heard pleas from 74 petitioners claiming ancestral possession. The court noted no documentary proof was submitted and directed the state to file a forest officer's affidavit confirming the encroachments.

The state argued the appellants are squatters, not forest dwellers, and are damaging wildlife habitats. Over 29 lakh bighas of reserve forest land statewide are encroached; 1 lakh bighas cleared since June. The petitioners, mostly Bengali-speaking Muslims, say they lost land to Brahmaputra erosion.

The court barred coercive steps until 14 August and allowed claimants to submit documents, noting notices lacked clear demarcation and eviction procedures weren't followed. *—PTI*

- The state government argued the appellants are squatters, not forest dwellers, and are damaging wildlife habitats. Over 29 lakh bighas of reserve forest statewide are encroached; 1 lakh bighas cleared since June

Didn't order closure of 'Kabutarkhanas': Bombay High Court

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

The Bombay High Court on Thursday said it had not passed any order directing the closure of 'Kabutarkhanas' (pigeon-feeding spots) in the city, but only refrained from staying the closure order of the municipal corporation.

A committee of experts can study whether the old Kabutarkhanas in the city should continue, but "human life is of paramount importance", it said.

Sheets were placed covering the Kabutarkhanas in the city, leading to protests. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had then claimed that the Kabutarkhanas were closed following the high court's order.

The court clarified that it had not passed any order.

It was for the government and BMC to take an informed decision to ensure that the constitutional rights of every citizen are upheld. *—PTI*

CAUGHT ON CAM

Cops unresponsive as man flashes in front of woman in Gurugram

GURUGRAM, 7 AUG

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

A model and digital content creator has alleged she was subjected to sexual harassment while waiting for a cab in Haryana's Gurugram.

The incident occurred on 2 August when the woman, while on her way back from Jaipur, was waiting for a cab.

The woman, Soni Singh recorded the incident on her phone and called the police and the women's helpline. She failed to get any response. Police however, filed an FIR after she shared her ordeal on social media.

Singh had booked a cab from Rajiv Chowk to her home. While waiting for the cab, a man approached her.

He reportedly circled around and constantly stared at her. He had unzipped his pant and begun masturbating in front of her.

"He made me feel very uncomfortable. I felt disgusted and helpless," Singh said while sharing the video on her Instagram and X accounts.

Singh finally got another cab, reached home and shared the episode, along with pictures of the man masturbating, on her Instagram and X accounts.

She finally booked another cab and reached home safely.

- The woman recorded the incident on her phone and called the police and the women's helpline. She failed to get any response. Police however, filed an FIR after she shared her ordeal on social media

When she did contacted the police, she was asked to come to the police station to register a complaint.

She appealed to the people on social media to help identify the man so he could be brought to justice. The content creator also blamed ride-hailing apps over the unresponsive driver of the first cab, who never arrived.

Police are trying to trace the offender. *—Agencies*

DIVINE PUNISHMENT

As the water level of the River Ganga rises, havoc follows. The swelling river has started to slowly swallow up Namo Ghat in Varanasi. Heavy rain has affected several cities and ghats in Uttar Pradesh, causing the streets and houses to be filled with water. The city witnessed knee-deep water levels with waterlogging disrupting the daily lives of people. Schools have been closed

PHOTO: PTI

HOW US TOUGHENED TRADE TERMS WITH INDIA

From labelling India the 'Tariff King' to slapping sweeping import duties, US President Donald Trump has steadily hardened his trade stance on India.

These announcements are being seen as a pressure tactic to get New Delhi to agree to demands made by the US in the proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA).

Here is a list of questions and answers (Q&A) about US tariffs on India and its impact on domestic exporters:

The high tariffs will affect sectors including textiles, gems and jewellery, shrimp, leather and footwear, chemicals, and electrical and mechanical machinery ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Q: Timeline of Trump's tariff actions against India

October 2019: Trump labels India the "tariff king"

September 2024: Trump calls India a "tariff abuser"

2 April, 2025: US formally announces a 26 per cent import tariff on Indian goods, effective 9 April.

5 April, 2025: White House executive order imposed a 10 per cent baseline tariff on imports, with country-specific tariff rates (16 per cent in case of India) scheduled to begin 9April.

Exemptions: Certain sectors kept out of these duties - pharmaceuticals, electronics, and energy products.

9 April, 2025: US pauses implementation of country-specific tariff rates (16 per cent in case of India) for 90 days, deferring it to 9 July. The 10 per cent baseline tariff remains.

8 July, 2025: Suspension period further extended to 1 August.

30 July, 2025: US announces 25 per cent tariff plus penalty on Indian goods. Penalty for buying crude oil and military equipment from Russia.

31 July, 2025: White House issues executive order for 25 per cent tariff to take effect 7 August. No mention of penalty. The 10 per cent baseline duty and exempted sectors remain unchanged.

5 Aug, 2025: Trump says he will raise tariffs further on India "very substantially". 6 August, 2025: Imposes an additional 25 per cent tariff, raising it to 50 per cent, on goods coming from India as a penalty for New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil.

Q: Current import duty structure on Indian goods

From 7 August, Indian goods entering the US are facing a 25 per cent, including 10 per cent baseline tariff, plus most favoured nation (MFN) rates plus trade remedy measures, if any.

For example, India's shrimp exports have a zero MFN rate. But it already attracts a 2.49 per cent anti-dumping duty and a 5.77 per cent countervailing duty.

From 7 August, Indian shrimp will face a 33.26 per cent levy that is, 25 per cent plus 2.49 per cent plus 5.77 per cent. From 27 August, domestic shrimp will attract a 58.26 per cent duty in the US, 50 per cent plus 2.49 per cent plus 5.77 per cent.

Q: Are there any other tariffs?

Yes. The US has imposed sector-specific tariffs on three categories - steel and aluminium (50 per cent); copper (50 per cent), and auto parts (25 per cent). These are also additional duties which means over and above existing levies, if any.

Q: Sectors or product exempted from these tariffs

According to think tank GTRI, the 50 per cent tariffs will not be applicable on the exempted categories included finished pharmaceutical drugs, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), and other key drug inputs; energy products such as crude oil, refined fuels, natural gas, coal, and electricity; critical minerals; and a wide range of electronics and semiconductors, including computers, tablets, smartphones, solid-state drives, flat panel displays, and integrated circuits.

In 2024-25, the bilateral trade between India and the US stood at USD 131.8 billion with USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports.

Q: Main export sectors affected by high tariffs

Sectors include textiles/clothing, gems and jewellery, shrimp, leather and footwear, chemicals, and electrical and mechanical machinery.

Q: How much were India's exports from these sectors in the last fiscal?

Shrimp was USD 2 billion, organic chemicals was USD 2.7 billion, carpets was USD 1.2 billion, apparel-knitted was USD 2.7 billion, apparel - woven was 2.7 billion, textiles, made ups was USD 3 billion, diamonds, gold and products was USD 10 billion, machinery and mechanical appliances was USD 7.7 billion, furniture, bedding, mattresses was USD 1.1 billion, and vehicle and parts was USD 2.6 billion.

Q: Exporters view

Seafood exporter Yogesh Gupta: Now India's shrimp will become expensive in the US market.

Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI): Huge setback. Deeply concerned. It will have a potential adverse impact.

Colin Shah, MD, Kama Jewellery: The move is a severe setback.

GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava: The tariffs are expected to make Indian goods far costlier in the US, with potential to cut US-bound exports by 40-50 per cent.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO): The announcement is "extremely shocking" and will impact 55 per cent of India's exports to America.

Q: What are the tariffs on India's trade competitors?

After the new levy, India will attract the highest tariff of 50 per cent along with Brazil.

After this, India's competitors will be much better placed in the US market as their duty is lower - Myanmar 40 per cent), Thailand and Cambodia (both 36 per cent), Bangladesh (35 per cent), Indonesia (32 per cent), China and Sri Lanka (both 30 per cent), Malaysia (25 per cent), Philippines and Vietnam (20 per cent). *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

Russia manipulating internet to isolate citizens

YouTube videos that won't load. A visit to a popular independent media website that produces only a blank page. Cellphone internet connections that are down for hours or days.

Going online in Russia can be frustrating, complicated and even dangerous.

It's not a network glitch but a deliberate, multi-pronged and long-term effort by authorities to bring the internet under the Kremlin's full control. Authorities adopted restrictive laws and banned websites and platforms that won't comply. Technology has been perfected to monitor and manipulate online traffic.

While it's still possible to circumvent restrictions by using virtual private network apps, those are routinely blocked, too.

Authorities further restricted internet access this summer with widespread shutdowns of cellphone internet connections and adopting a law punishing users for searching for content they deem illicit.

They also are threatening to go after the popular WhatsApp platform while rolling out a new "national" messenger that's widely expected to be heavily monitored.

President Vladimir Putin urged the government to "stifle" foreign internet services and ordered officials to assemble a list of platforms from "unfriendly" states that should be restricted.

Authorities seem more adept at it now, compared with previous, largely futile efforts to restrict online activities, and they're edging closer to isolating the internet in Russia.

Human Rights Watch researcher Anastasiia Kruope describes Moscow's approach to reining in the internet as "death by a thousand cuts."

Censorship after 2011-12 protests

Kremlin efforts to control what Russians do, read or say online dates to 2011-12, when the internet was used to challenge authority. Independent media outlets bloomed, and anti-government demonstrations that were coordinated online erupted after disputed parliamentary elections and Putin's decision to run again for president.

Russia began adopting regulations tightening internet controls. Some blocked websites; others required providers to store call records and messages, sharing it with security services if needed, and install equipment allowing authorities to control and cut off traffic.

Companies like Google or Facebook were pressured to store user data on Russian servers, to no avail, and plans were announced for a "sovereign internet" that could be cut off from the rest of the world.

Russia's popular Facebook-like social media platform VK, founded by Pavel Durov long before he launched the Telegram messenger, came under the control of Kremlin-friendly companies. Russia tried to block Telegram between 2018-20 but failed.

Prosecutions for social media posts and comments became common, showing that authorities were closely watching the online space. Still, experts had dismissed Kremlin efforts to rein in the internet as futile, arguing Russia was far from building something akin to China's "Great Firewall," which Beijing uses to block foreign websites.

Ukraine invasion triggers crackdown

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the government blocked major social media like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as well as Signal and a few other messaging apps. VPNs also were targeted, making it harder to reach restricted websites.

YouTube access was disrupted last summer in what experts called deliberate throttling by authorities. The Kremlin blamed YouTube owner Google for not maintaining its hardware in Russia.

Independent news site Mediazona reported that several other popular Western hosting providers also are being inhibited.

Cyber lawyer Sarkis Darbinyan, founder of Russian internet freedom group Roskomsvoboda, said authorities have been trying to push businesses to migrate to Russian hosting providers that can be controlled.

He estimates about half of all Russian websites are powered by foreign hosting and infrastructure providers, many offering better quality and price than domestic equivalents.

Another concerning trend is the consolidation of Russia's internet providers and companies that manage IP addresses, according to a 30 July Human Rights Watch report.

Last year, authorities raised the cost of obtaining an internet provider license about USD 90 to over USD 12,300, and state data shows that more than half of all IP addresses in Russia are managed by seven large companies, with Rostelecom, Russia's state telephone and internet giant, accounting for 25 per cent.

The Kremlin is striving "to control the internet space in Russia, and to censor things, to manipulate the traffic," said HRW's Kruope.

Criminalising extremist' searches

A new Russian law criminalised online searches for broadly defined "extremist" materials. That could include LGBTQ+ content, opposition groups, some songs by performers critical of Kremlin — and Navalny's memoir, which was designated as extremist.

Right advocates say it's a step toward punishing consumers — not just providers — like in Belarus, where people are routinely fined or jailed for reading or following certain independent media outlets. Another major step could be blocking WhatsApp, which monitoring service Mediascope said had over 97 million monthly users in April.

WhatsApp "should prepare to leave the Russian market," said lawmaker Anton Gorelkin, and a new "national" messenger, MAX, developed by social media company VK, would take its place, he said.

Its terms and conditions say it will share user data with authorities upon request, and a new law stipulates its preinstallation in all smartphones sold in Russia. State institutions, officials and businesses are actively encouraged to move communications and blogs to MAX.

Anastasia Zhyrmont of the Access Now internet freedom group said both Telegram and WhatsApp were disrupted in Russia in July in what could be a test of how potential blockages would affect internet infrastructure.

Russia is "not there yet" in isolating its internet from the rest of the world, Darbinyan said, but Kremlin efforts are "bringing it closer." *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

The Election Commission is no longer a watchdog. It has become the Executive's captive institution

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA

It no longer safeguards elections. It safeguards outcomes for the BJP.

Congress will take this fight from the Parliament to the people's court.

For the past decade, India's democracy has been under attack. The BJP's most dangerous move was not just capturing power. It was capturing institutions. The latest institution to fall is the Election Commission of India. It no longer functions as a neutral referee. It works like the BJP's rigging machinery, fixing elections instead of safeguarding them.

The CBI, ED, and Income Tax Department were already being used to target the opposition. Now, the BJP has converted the Election Commission into its newest weapon. A tool to erase voters, suppress voices, and destroy the foundation of free and fair elections.

What we saw in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is just the beginning. This is not mismanagement. This is premeditated fraud.

PHOTO: PTI

BIHAR

In Bihar, nearly 65 lakh voter names have been deleted from the rolls. This is not a clerical oversight. It is a brutal assault on democracy. The voters erased are mostly the poor, the Dalits, the backward classes, and minorities. These are the same people who stand with the opposition.

This is political cleansing. The BJP wants to win not by votes, but by vanishing voters.

The Supreme Court had ordered that voter identity be verified through Aadhaar, voter ID, or ration cards. The Election Commission ignored the court. It obeyed the BJP. The areas affected are the very areas where Congress is strong and the BJP is scared.

The ECI now stands for ERASER COMMISSION OF INDIA - erasing electoral rolls, erasing complaints, and erasing the very idea of free and fair elections.

This is not democracy. This is deletion by design.

MAHARASHTRA

In Maharashtra, 70 lakh votes were cast in just 30 minutes. This is not polling. This is hacking.

Rahul Gandhi raised this directly with the Election Commission. What followed was a wall of silence. No probe. No response. No accountability. The Commission acted not like a constitutional body, but like a coward hiding under the BJP's command.

KARNATAKA

In Bengaluru Central, 65,000 votes were cast in 10 minutes. Is this an election or a rigged circus?

The magician is the BJP. The event manager is the Election Commission.

Congress has filed 27 complaints against Narendra Modi with the Commission since 2019. Not even one resulted in action. Not even a warning. The Commission is not neutral. It is the BJP's shield and sword.

Karnataka will be the launchpad for our resistance. We will expose this fraud, street by street and booth by booth.

NATIONWIDE

Across the country, the same story unfolds. In BJP-ruled states, votes appear out of thin air. In opposition-leaning states, entire communities disappear from the electoral rolls.

Migrant workers remain disenfranchised. Dalits and Adivasis are being wiped out of the voter lists. The BJP is not just tampering with elections. It is deleting democracy, one name at a time.

This is not electioneering. This is engineering of outcomes. This is not the will of the people. This is the will of a regime clinging to power by poisoning the very institutions meant to hold it accountable.

The Election Commission was created to be the guardian of free and fair elections. Today, it is the funeral director of Indian democracy.

This is bigger than missing names. This is about the future of India. This is about the Constitution that BR Ambedkar gave us, now being shredded in silence.

This is a betrayal of every Indian who stands in line to vote, believing their voice matters. The BJP has turned elections into a sham. They buy legislators. They manipulate machines. And now, with the Election Commission in their pocket, they are erasing the people altogether.

Congress will not stand down. We will fight in the courts, in the streets, in Parliament, and in every village of this country. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, we will wake the people up and bring this fraud into the sunlight. The time for silence is over. The time to resist is now.

Randeep Singh Surjewala,
Rajya Sabha MP &
Karnataka Congress
In-Charge

S Korean sleuths seek arrest of Yoon's wife

SEOUL, 7 AUG

South Korean investigators on Thursday requested a warrant to arrest the wife of jailed former President Yoon Suk Yeol, a day after questioning her over suspicions including bribery, stock manipulation and political influence-peddling. Yoon, for the second time in a week, resisted an attempt to compel him to appear for questioning in his wife's case, forcing prison officials to abandon their efforts after an hourlong struggle due to concerns of injury, the investigators said. The detention warrant for Yoon expires Thursday. The investigation targeting Yoon's wife, Kim Keon Hee, is one of three separate special prosecutor probes launched under the government of President Lee Jae Myung related to Yoon. *—PTI*

Sudanese airstrike at Darfur airport kills 40 fighters

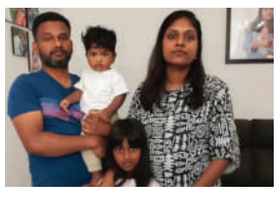
CAIRO, 7 AUG

A Sudanese airstrike hit an airport in the country's Darfur region controlled by a notorious paramilitary group, destroying a suspected Emirati military aircraft and killing dozens of suspected mercenaries, Sudanese officials and a rebel adviser said Thursday. Wednesday's strike on the Nyala airport killed at least 40 suspected mercenaries from Colombia and destroyed a shipment of arms and equipment that were sent by the UAE to the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF. State-run Sudan TV described the strike as a "blatant message" and a "new equation of deterrence" against foreign interference in Sudan's affairs. *—PTI*

Spain shelves F-35 fighter jet purchase plans

MADRID, 7 AUG

Spain has reportedly decided to "indefinitely" suspend its plans to acquire the fifth-generation F-35 fighter jets from the United States, as detailed in a Politico report citing local media. Preliminary contacts for the purchase have been halted, with the Spanish government now considering European options, including the Eurofighter Typhoon and the upcoming Future Combat Air System (FCAS). This shift represents a "major setback" for Lockheed Martin, which had previously attracted Spanish interest. The decision may strain relations between Spain and the US, particularly after Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez criticised NATO's defence spending target. *—PTI*



Six-yr-old Indian girl faces racist assault in Ireland

DUBLIN, 7 AUG

A six-year-old Indian-origin girl, Nia Naveen, was attacked by a gang of children aged 12 to 14 in Waterford City, Ireland. While playing outside her home, Nia was physically assaulted, with her mother, Anupa Achuthan, recounting the ordeal: "They punched her in the face, hit her private parts with a bicycle... and pulled her hair." Nia was left so scared that she cried upon returning home. Despite reporting the incident to the gardai, Ms Achuthan seeks counselling for the attackers rather than punishment, stating, "I believe this estate belongs to them as well." She expressed distress over her daughter's safety, saying, "I do not feel safe here... I never expected such an incident would happen." *—Agencies*

TRUMP'S RECIPROCAL TARIFFS TAKE EFFECT

Billions of dollars in tariffs are now flowing into the United States, claims Trump

WASHINGTON, 7 AUG

US President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs on more than 60 countries came into effect on Thursday.

"It's midnight!!! Billions of dollars In Tariffs are now flowing into the United States Of America!" Trump said on Truth Social as the clock struck 12 midnight in the US, ushering in the 7 August date.

"Reciprocal tariffs take effect at midnight tonight! Billions of dollars, largely from countries that have taken advantage of the United States for many years, laughing all the way, will start flowing into the USA. The only thing that can stop America's greatness would be a radical left court that wants to see our country fail!" Trump said in another post.

The tariffs in the list ranged from 10 per cent to 40 per cent. Products from the European Union, Japan and South Korea will be taxed at 15 per cent, while imports from Taiwan, Vietnam and Bangladesh will be taxed at 20 per cent.

For places such as the EU, Japan and South Korea, Trump also expects them to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in the US.

> **As the boss says, let's see what happens. Keep in mind that we have over 50 per cent tariffs on China already. We have over 50 per cent tariffs on China, so we don't want to get to a point where we actually hurt ourselves. (But) India is the maharaja of tariffs**
>
> -Peter Navarro, White House Trade Adviser

100% TARIFFS ON FOREIGN COMPUTER CHIPS

Trump said that he will impose a 100 per cent tariff on computer chips not built in the U. "We will be putting a tariff of approximately 100 per cent on chips and semiconductors," Trump said in the Oval Office while meeting with Apple CEO Tim Cook. "But if you are building in the US, there is no charge."

This is expected to hurt Taiwan, which has been increasingly looking to the West in the face of Chinese incursion.

Taiwan is home to the world's largest contract chipmaker, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC). Its advanced chip technologies are indispensable to everything from iPhones to fighter jets. *—PTI*

Americans get 55% calories from junk

Most Americans get more than half their calories from ultraprocessed foods, according to a new federal report. Overall, about 55 per cent of total calories consumed by Americans aged 1 and older came from ultraprocessed foods during the period between August 2021 to August 2023, said the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention report. For adults, ultraprocessed foods made up about 53 per cent of total calories consumed, but for kids through age 18, it was nearly 62 per cent. Top sources included burgers and sandwiches, sweet baked goods, savory snacks, pizza and sweetened drinks.

Don threatens Fallon & Kimmel

Trump called popular late-night host Stephen Colbert "talentless" and predicted that other hosts like Jimmy Fallon and Jimmy Kimmel would also lose their shows soon. Trump's comments come after CBC announced it would cancel 'The Late Show with Stephen Colbert' following a 10-year run. "Colbert has no talent. I mean, I could take anybody here. I could go outside in the beautiful streets and pick a couple of people that do just as well or better. They get higher ratings than he did.

Trump to meet Putin soon

WASHINGTON/MOSCOW, 7 AUG

The Kremlin and a White House official said Thursday that a meeting in the coming days between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump has been agreed on.

Putin's Foreign Affairs Adviser Yuri Ushakov said the two sides are working on setting up a meeting, and that a venue for the meeting has been agreed on and will be announced later.

This would their first meeting since Trump return to office this year.

However, the Kremlin downplayed the possibility of a three-way meeting between Trump, Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, which Washington had floated.

"This was just something mentioned by the American side during the meeting in the Kremlin.

But this was not discussed. The Russian side left this option completely without comment," Ushakov said.

This would be their first meeting since Trump's return to office this year *PHOTO: PTI*

This comes shortly after Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff met with Putin in Moscow on Wednesday.

Trump had posted earlier on Truth Social that Witkoff "had a highly productive meeting" with Putin in which "great progress was made".

Trump said he updated America's allies in Europe about the meeting and that they will work toward an end to the Russia-Ukraine war "in the days and weeks to come".

Meanwhile, United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan began his visit of Russia on Thursday, where he is expected to Putin to strengthen bilateral relations. *—Agencies*

Ukrainians want negotiated end to war, reveals poll

WASHINGTON, 7 AUG

After more than three years of war, Ukrainians are increasingly eager for a settlement that ends the fight against Russia's invasion, according to a new Gallup poll published Thursday. Only about a quarter of Ukrainians surveyed expect the war to end within the next 12 months.

The enthusiasm for a negotiated deal is a sharp reversal from 2022 — the year the war began — when Gallup found that about three-quarters of Ukrainians wanted to keep fighting until victory. Now only about one-quarter hold that view, with support for continuing the war declining steadily across all regions and demographic groups.

The findings were based on samples of 1,000 or more respondents ages 15 and older living in Ukraine. *—PTI*

Myanmar's acting Prez Myint Swe dies aged 74

BANGKOK, 7 AUG

Myint Swe, who became Myanmar's acting President under controversial circumstances after the military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi more than four years ago, died on Thursday, the military said. He was 74.

He died at a military hospital in the capital, Naypyitaw, on Thursday morning, said Myanmar's military information office.

Myint Swe's death came more than a year after he stopped actively carrying out his Presidential duties after he was publicly reported to be ailing.

His funeral will be held at the state level but the date has not been disclosed, a separate statement from the military information office said.

State media reported on Tuesday that he had been in critical condition and receiving intensive care since 24 July at a military hospital in Naypyitaw.

Myint Swe *PHOTO: ANI*

State media said in July last year that Myint Swe was unable to carry out normal daily activities, including eating. A few days later, he authorised Senior Gen.

Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government, to assume his presidential duties while he was on medical leave. *—PTI*

UA flights face major drag amid tech outage

HOUSTON, 7 AUG

Over 800 United Airlines flights were cancelled and hundreds more delayed by late Wednesday following a significant technology outage, resulting in a systemwide ground stop across the United States and severely disrupting both domestic and international travel.

At Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH), where United has a key hub, frustrated passengers filled the terminals. IAH attributed the outage to failures in its dispatch and fuelling systems. "Due to a technology issue, we are holding United mainline flights at their departure airports," said United in a statement. "We expect additional flight delays this evening as we work through this issue."

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) confirmed that United initiated the grounding, stating, "United Airlines requested the FAA to pause its departures nationwide while they addressed a technology issue. The FAA is monitoring the situation closely."

Passengers voiced their frustrations, with Ishya, travelling from New York, saying, "This visit home was my little reset, and now it is turning into an unplanned extension." *—PTI*

Bibi seeks approval for expanded Gaza military as 37 people killed

TEL AVIV, 7 AUG

The Israeli security cabinet is set to meet Thursday evening to discuss a possible expansion of Israel's military operations in Gaza, a move that — if happens — would come despite fierce opposition from many in Israel, including the families of hostages who remain in Hamas captivity.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been meeting this week with top advisers and security officials to discuss what his office said are ways to "further achieve Israel's goals in Gaza".

However, Israel's Army Chief, Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, has warned that the plan would endanger the hostages and further strain Israel's army, which has been stretched thin during a nearly two-year war, according to Israeli media. The comments appear to have exposed a rift between Netanyahu and his army.

Palestinians rush to collect humanitarian aid airdropped by parachutes into Gaza City, northern Gaza Strip, Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

The meeting comes as 37 Palestinians were killed in airstrikes and shootings across southern Gaza, according to local hospitals. Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis said 13 of the fatalities were from people attempting to access aid near a distribution site run by a contractor. *—Agencies*

China claims total control over next Dalai Lama

BEIJING, 7 AUG

In a display of China's authoritarian grip over Tibet, Beijing has once again claimed total control over the reincarnation process of the Dalai Lama, rejecting the spiritual leader's authority on the matter.

The statement came from Gama Cedain, chairman of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), during a news conference in Beijing marking the 60th anniversary of TAR's founding, as reported by Tibetan Review.

Cedain, also the deputy secretary of the Chinese Communist Party's TAR committee, said, "The cen-t r a l government has the indisputable final say in the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama." *—ANI*

SEVERITY HAS CHANGED

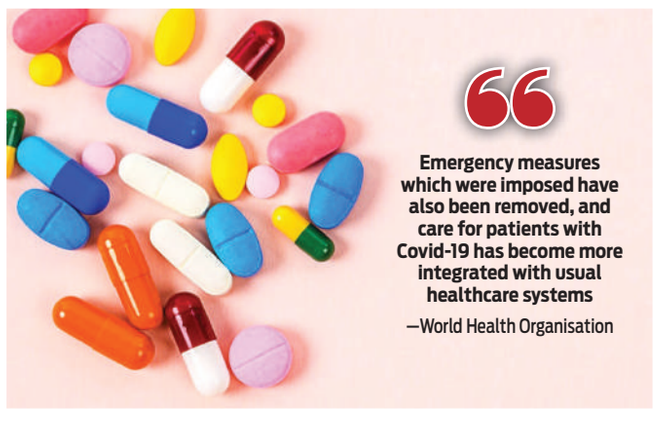
WHO bars antibiotics for Covid-19 patients

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has advised against the use of antibiotics even in patients with severe Covid when a concurrent bacterial infection is not suspected.

The global health body has released updated recommendations for the clinical management of people with Covid which, it said, are based on evidence generated from recent meta-analysis of outcomes of patients treated with antibiotics for the virus.

"For patients with non-severe Covid-19 and a low clinical suspicion of a concurrent bacterial infection, we recommend no empirical antibiotics. For patients with severe Covid-19 and a low clinical suspicion of a concurrent bacterial infection, we suggest no empirical antibiotics," the WHO said.



> **Emergency measures which were imposed have also been removed, and care for patients with Covid-19 has become more integrated with usual healthcare systems**
>
> —World Health Organisation

The WHO said that as Covid-19 epidemiology and severity have changed, and as emergency measures have subsided, the evidence behind a number of recommendations has changed.

Recommendations were implemented in a very different context in 2024 compared to 2020, it said.

"Notable changes to Covid-19 disease over this time have been overall reduced infection rates and reduced disease severity.

Emergency measures which were imposed have also been removed, and care for patients with Covid-19 has become more integrated with usual healthcare systems," the WHO said.

The SARS-CoV-2 continues to infect several thousands of people daily leading to preventable morbidity and mortality across the world, the WHO said. The roll-out of vaccines and treatment for Covid-19, and increasing population immunity from infection has substantially reduced hospitalisation, severity of disease, and mortality.

"However, the virus continues to evolve in terms of infectivity, immune escape, and disease severity. This guideline robustly and transparently addresses the changing landscape and evidence availability, and the continual development of treatment and management strategies for Covid-19," the WHO stated. *—PTI*

WASHINGTON, 7 AUG

The United States is in a new space race with China to claim the most resource-rich part of the moon, NASA's interim administrator Sean Duffy said while announcing plans to install a nuclear reactor on the lunar surface by 2030.

"We're in a race to the moon, in a race with China to the moon. And to have a base on the moon, we need energy," he said Addressing a press conference on Tuesday (local time) titled "Unleashing American Drone Dominance" held by the US Department of Transportation, which Duffy also leads.

"There's a certain part of the moon that everyone knows is the best," he said. "We have ice there. We have sunlight there. We want to get there first and claim that for America" he said.

CURBS ON NASA MISSIONS

Meanwhile, reports said the Trump administration is moving to shut down two NASA missions that monitor a potent greenhouse gas and plant health, potentially shutting off an important source of data for scientists, policymakers and farmers. *—PTI & ANI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Rupee rises by 3P, closes at 87.69 against USD

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by just 3 paise at 87.69 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, after US President Donald Trump slapped an additional 25 per cent duty -- doubling it to 50 per cent -- on Indian goods, denting market sentiments. Forex traders said weak crude oil prices and a decline in the US Dollar index supported the rupee. However, muted domestic markets and foreign fund outflows capped sharp gains. Moreover, Trump's aggressive move, which kicks in 21 days, threatens to raise total duties on select Indian exports to as high as 50 per cent -- making them among the most heavily taxed US imports globally, further dented market sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 87.69 and moved in a range of 87.67-87.77 during the day before settling at 87.69 (provisional), rising 3 paise from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee rebounded from a record low level and closed 16 paise higher at 87.72 against the US dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.10 per cent to 98.08. In the domestic equity market, the Sensex advanced 79.27 points to settle at 80,623.26, while Nifty was up 21.95 points to 24,596.15. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,999.10 crore on a net basis on Wednesday, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

JSW Cement IPO subscribed 29% on first day of issue

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The initial public offer of JSW Cement Ltd, part of the diversified JSW Group, received 29 per cent subscription on the first day of bidding on Thursday. The initial share sale got bids for 5,21,07,720 shares against 18,12,94,964 shares on offer, as per NSE data. The category for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) received 36 per cent subscription while the quota for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) attracted 23 per cent subscription. The portion for non-institutional investors got covered 20 per cent. JSW Cement on Wednesday mobilised Rs 1,080 crore from anchor investors. The company has set a price band of Rs 139-147 per share, valuing the 17-year-old company at Rs 20,000 cr at the upper end of the price band. Agro-based firm Regaal Resources will launch its Rs 306 cr IPO from Aug 12–14, priced at Rs 96–Rs 102 per share. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

India eyes 97GW rise in coal, lignite power capacity

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Indian Ministry of Power has announced plans to increase coal and lignite-based electricity generation capacity by 97 GW, aiming for a total of 307 GW of thermal installed capacity by 2034-35. Minister of State for Power Shripad Yesso Naik stated, "The projected thermal capacity requirement by 2034-35 is estimated at approximately 307,000 MW, compared to the 211,855 MW installed capacity as of 31 March 2023." This initiative aligns with India's goal of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2070. The current installed capacity is 485 GW, slated to rise to around 870 GW by 2031-32. *—PTI*

Govt may prioritise support for tariff-impacted sectors

US' additional 25% tariff will hit textiles & chemicals sectors

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, 7 AUG

The government may prioritise support measures for sectors, like textiles and chemicals, which would be severely impacted by the US tariffs, under the export promotion mission, industry sources said on Thursday.

The issues were discussed in the commerce ministry's consultations with exporters from the textiles and chemicals sectors to assess the impact and explore possible support measures, they added.

They said that the ministry is working on the export promotion mission, announced in the Budget.

The government on 1 February announced the setting up of the mission with an outlay of Rs 2,250 crore.

India's textiles exports to the US stood at about USD 11 billion, while chemical exports to the US stood at about USD 6 billion.

US President Donald Trump slapped an additional 25 per cent tariff, raising the total duties on Indian exports to 50 per cent **PHOTO: PTI**

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday slapped an additional 25 per cent tariff, raising the total duties to 50 per cent on goods coming from India.

Additionally the apparel exporters body AEPC is seeking immediate fiscal support of the government on the doubling of tariffs by the Trump administration on Indian goods will sound the death knell for micro and medium enterprises, particularly those heavily dependent on the American market.

Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said the announcement is a huge setback to the labour-intensive export industry.

The US is a key market for Indian ready-made garment exports, he said.

Meanwhile, a day after the doubling of tariffs, Dammu Ravi, secretary for economic relations in the Ministry of External Affairs said this is a "unilateral decision" devoid of any logic or reason, and added that negotiations are still going on between New Delhi and Washington. *—PTI*

TCS to increase wage of 80% employees from next month

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

India's largest IT services company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) informed employees that it will roll-out wage hikes for about 80 per cent of workforce, covering mid to junior levels.

The wage hikes comes at a time when TCS is set to lay off about 12,000 employees this year.

The wage hikes will be effective September 1, TCS CHRO Milind Lakkad and CHRO Designate K Sudeep said in an email sent to employees on Wednesday.

"We are pleased to announce a compensation revision for all eligible associates in grades upto C3A and equivalent, covering 80 per cent of our workforce. This will be effective 1st September 2025," it says.

The email says, "We would like to thank each one of you for your dedication and hard work, as we build the future of TCS together."

The wage hikes comes at a time when TCS is set to lay off about 12,000 employees this year **PHOTO: ANI**

The extent of wage hikes could not be immediately ascertained.

When reached for comment, the company said: "We can confirm that we will be issuing wage hikes to around 80 per cent of our employees effective 1st September 2025."

The move comes at a time when TCS has decided to lay off over 12,000 employees.

"TCS is on a journey to become a future-ready organisation. This includes strategic initiatives on multiple fronts, including investing in new-tech areas, entering new markets, deploying AI at scale for our clients and ourselves, deepening our partnerships, creating next-gen infrastructure, and realigning our workforce model," the company said as the news of layoffs shook the IT industry. *—PTI*

Adani Power to develop 2.4GW plant in Bihar

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Adani Power has announced it has received a letter of intent from the Bihar State Power Generation Company Ltd (BSPGCL) to develop and operate a 2,400 megawatt thermal power plant in Bhagalpur District, with an investment of USD 3 billion. The company anticipates receiving the Letter of Award shortly, following which a Power Supply Agreement will be executed with state utilities.

The LoI includes arrangements to supply 2,274 MW of energy to North Bihar Power Distribution Company Ltd (NBPDCL) and South Bihar Power Distribution Company Ltd (SBPDCL). Adani Power emerged as the lowest bidder in a competitive tender process, securing a final supply price of Rs 6.075 per kWh.

The first unit is expected to be commissioned within 48 months of the appointed date, with the last unit to follow within 60 months. *—PTI*

EU sanctions hit Nayara fuel shipments

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy used ships to transport fuels like petrol and diesel to key consumption hubs along the west coast, reaching as far as Odisha. However, this supply chain has now been disrupted after shipowners, wary of European Union sanctions, halted the lifting of products from the company's refinery in Vadinar, Gujarat.

Top executives from the company met with Shipping Ministry officials on Thursday, seeking assistance in securing vessels to transport fuels to key locations, including Maharashtra, Mangalore in Karnataka, Chennai, and parts of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Nayara operates a 20-million-tonne-a-year oil refinery in Vadinar, Gujarat. Unlike other refiners, the facility is not connected to a pipeline network that delivers fuel directly to consumption centers. Instead, the company relies on ships to transport products to nearby ports, from where they are distributed by truck.

But Indian shipping lines pulled out of this arrangement after the European Union, in a bid to punish Moscow for its war in Ukraine, last month sanctioned Nayara Energy for its Russian ties.

Sources said shipping companies were unable to secure insurance coverage for the voyages. *—PTI*

Ant Financial sells 1.46% stake in Eternal

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Chinese billionaire Jack Ma-owned Ant Financial on Thursday made a partial exit by divesting a 1.46 per cent stake in Eternal, the parent company of Zomato and Blinkit brands, for Rs 4,097 crore through open market transactions.

This comes days after Ant Financial exited One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, by selling its entire 5.84 per cent stake for Rs 3,980 crore through open market transactions.

Ant Group through its arm Antfin Singapore Holding Pte Ltd sold a little over 14.13 crore equity shares or a 1.46 per cent stake in Gurugram-based Eternal, as per the bulk deal data on the NSE. Ant Group, formerly known as Ant Financial, is an affiliate company of the Chinese conglomerate Alibaba Group. The shares were offloaded at an average price of Rs 289.91 apiece. Antfin's holding in Eternal is down to 0.49 per cent stake from 1.95 per cent.

Details of the buyers of Eternal's shares could not be ascertained on the exchange. Shares of Eternal rose 1.46 per cent to close at Rs 303.20 apiece on National Stock Exchange.

Last month, food delivery and quick commerce firm Eternal reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 25 crore for the first quarter. The company, which re-branded itself as Eternal in March, had reported a net profit of Rs 253 crore a year ago. In August last year, Antfin Singapore Holding sold a little over 2 per cent stake in Zomato for Rs 4,771 crore. Prior to that, in March, Antfin pared a 2 per cent stake in Gurugram-based food delivery firm for Rs 2,827 crore. In 2023, Alipay Singapore Holding divested its entire 3.44 per cent holding in Zomato for Rs 3,337 cr. *—PTI*

Gold jumps ₹3,600 to hit record amid American tariff concerns

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Gold prices rallied Rs 3,600 to hit a record high of Rs 1,02,620 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday as investors turned to safe-haven assets after the US administration announced a 25 per cent additional tariff on Indian imports.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 99,020 per 10g on Wednesday.

In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity rallied by Rs 3,600 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,02,200 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Thursday.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

It had settled at Rs 98,600 per 10g in the previous market close. "Gold prices have risen to the upper end of the weekly range on Thursday, driven by renewed trade concerns that have increased demand for traditional safe-haven assets.

"Additionally, the US administration imposed an additional 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports, intensifying the trade tensions between the two economies," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. *—PTI*

NEGATES TARIFF JOLT

Market indices make a comeback amid Trump's tariffs storm

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty staged a comeback on Thursday following the last-hour buying in IT and banking shares, even as US President Donald Trump slapping an additional 25 per cent duty on Indian goods weighed on investor sentiment.

Rebounding around 926 points from the day's low, the 30-share BSE Sensex edged higher by 79.27 points or 0.10 per cent to settle at 80,623.26. The index traded in the red for most of the session and hit a low of 79,811.29. However, fag-end buying helped recover losses and touch a high of 80,737.55.

The 50-share NSE Nifty went up by 21.95 points or 0.09 per cent to 24,596.15.

The latest US tariff action, imposition of an additional 25 per cent duty to take overall tariffs to 50 per cent on Indian goods over New Delhi's continued imports of Russian oil, is likely to hit sectors such as textiles, marine and leather exports hard. India has slammed the action, calling it "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

India will attract the highest US tariff of 50 per cent, along with Brazil.

Among Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Eternal, Axis Bank, Maruti, Tata Steel, HDFC Bank and Asian Paints were the gainers.

However, Adani Ports, Trent, Tata Motors, Hindustan Unilever and NTPC were among the laggards.

Telecommunication dropped 0.59 per cent, capital goods (0.41 per cent), commodities (0.37 per cent), power (0.36 per cent) and industrials (0.24 per cent).

As many as 2,193 stocks declined while 1,844 advanced and 154 remained unchanged on the BSE. *—PTI*

BHEL SHARES TUMBLE NEARLY 5% AFTER Q1 EARNINGS

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Shares of state-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd's (BHEL) on Thursday ended nearly 5 per cent lower after the company said its consolidated net loss widened to Rs 455.50 crore in June quarter compared to a year ago.

The stock dropped 4.94 per cent to settle at Rs 227.80 on the BSE.

During the day, it tanked 7.15 per cent to Rs 222.50. At the NSE, the stock declined 4.85 per cent to Rs 228.18. The company's market valuation eroded by Rs 4,126.24 crore to Rs 79,321.40 crore.

BHEL on Wednesday said its consolidated net loss widened to Rs 455.50 crore in June quarter compared to a year ago, mainly due to higher expenses. Total expenses rose to Rs 6,279.78 crore in the quarter from Rs 5,874.98 crore. However, the total income rose slightly to Rs 5,658.07 crore in the quarter from Rs 5,581.78 crore. *—PTI*

Apple to use only US-made magnets: Tim Cook

WASHINGTON, 7 AUG

Technology giant Apple has announced a major push to expand its manufacturing base in the United States, including a decision to exclusively use rare-earth magnets made in the country.

The announcement came during a press conference held on Wednesday, where Apple CEO Tim Cook appeared alongside US President Donald Trump.

Cook stated that Apple will now source only American-made rare-earth magnets for its devices. These magnets will be developed by MP Materials, the only fully integrated rare-earth producer in the United States.

He said, "This year alone, the American manufacturers are on track to make 19 billion chips for Apple in 24 factories across 12 different states. Second, we're committed to buying American-made and advanced rare-earth magnets developed by MP Materials, which will become part of Apple's devices shipped around the world".

With this partnership, MP Materials will significantly expand its flagship facility in Fort Worth, Texas. *—ANI*

EARNING FROM DIVIDENDS

Mukesh Ambani draws no salary from Reliance for 5th year

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani drew nil salary from his oil-to-telecom-and-retail conglomerate Reliance Industries for the fifth year in a row and dividends remain his main source of earnings.

Ambani, 68, had capped his annual remuneration at Rs 15 crore from financial year 2008-2009 to 2019-20 (FY20); and since FY21, he opted to forego his salary, due to COVID-19 pandemic, until the company and all its businesses were fully back to their earnings potential.

In 2024-25 (FY25), he got 'nil' as salary, allowances, and perquisites as well as retiral benefits, according to the latest annual report of the company.

However, dividend income seems to be the source of earnings for the world's 18th richest person with a net worth of just under USD 100 billion.

He directly holds 1.61 crore shares in Reliance, earning Rs 8.85 crore in dividend income based on the Rs 5.50 per share dividend declared by the company for FY25.

The promoter group firms that he controls, own 664.5 crore shares, or 50.07 per cent, give a dividend income of Rs 3,655 crore.

Ambani, who has been on the board of Reliance since 1977 and was elevated as chairman of the company after the death of his father and group patriarch Dhirubhai Ambani in July 2002, was in 2023 re-appointed as the head of Reliance for another five-year term till April 2029 - a period during which he opted to draw nil salary.

In all these years, Ambani did not avail of any allowances, perquisites, retiral benefits, commission or stock options from Reliance for his role as the Chairman and Managing Director. *—PTI*

Reliance builds 4 growth engines

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Reliance Industries has built four major growth engines retail, digital services, media & entertainment, and new energy to drive its next phase of expansion, Chairman Mukesh Ambani said in the company's annual report. Traditionally reliant on oil and petrochemicals, Reliance is now transforming into a deep-tech enterprise, integrating cutting-edge technologies across all business verticals.Ambani said the platforms are "technology-first and innovation-led", aiming to disrupt industries and deliver significant value to both Indian and global consumers. *—Agencies*

AIFF proposes Super Cup before ISL in September

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Thursday proposed that the Super Cup be held from the second or third week of September to ensure the ISL clubs get a sufficient number of competitive matches, though doubts remain over the start date and format of the top-tier league this season.

The AIFF proposed a meeting with representatives of all the Indian Super League clubs, who have, of late, expressed their concerns after the upcoming season of ISL was put on hold due to uncertainty surrounding the renewal of the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) between the league organisers and the national federation.

AIFF proposes that the Super Cup football tournament start from the second or third week of September to ensure the ISL clubs get enough competitive matches.

The AIFF and all the 13 ISL clubs collectively decided in the national interest. We will meet again in 7 to 10 days and take a final decision, said AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey.Representatives of Mohun Bagan Super Giant, East Bengal, and Odisha FC joined the meeting virtually. Representatives of all the other 10 ISL clubs attended the meeting in person, in the national capital."We are hoping to have ISL this season, though it may be a bit late. But we can do it with certain changes, maybe in format or other things.

But that will be decided later; no decision on those things yet." Chaubey said on the uncertainty surrounding the ISL.Super Cup is normally held at the end of the season, but under the circumstances, it is likely to kick off the season.India plays Singapore in the AFC Asian Cup qualification round on October 9 and 14, and the Super Cup is likely to end before these national team fixtures.ISL, the country's top-tier league, normally runs from September to April, and the current MRA between Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL), which organises the event, and the AIFF is scheduled to expire on 8 December 2025. *—PTI*

Luis leads Inter Miami to 3-1 win over Pumas

DUBAI, 7 AUG

Luis Suarez scored and had two assists as Inter Miami beat Pumas 3-1 on Thursday morning to advance in the Leagues Cup. Miami played the match without Lionel Messi, who is sidelined indefinitely with what the team described as a minor muscle injury in his right leg. Messi was hurt in the opening minutes of Inter Miami's win over Necaxa on Saturday. He was in attendance for Wednesday's night match and watched from a suite at Chase Stadium. Miami, which has eight points in the Major League Soccer Leagues Cup standings, is the first MLS club through to the tournament's knockout stages. Rodrigo scored his first Inter Miami goal from an assist from Suarez in the 45th, tying the match after Pumas' Jorge Ruvalcaba opened scoring in the 34th. Suarez put Inter Miami ahead 2-1 when he converted a penalty kick in the 59th after a handball was called on Pumas defender José Caicedo in the penalty area.*—PTI*

GM: Erigaisi wins, Nihal loses in opening round

CHENNAI, 7 AUG

India's Arjun Erigaisi delivered a commanding performance against American Awonder Liang, while compatriot Nihal Sarin lost to Germany's Vincent Keymer in the opening round of the Chennai Grandmasters Chess tournament on Thursday. World No. 5 Erigaisi thus earned a full point in the Rs 1 crore round-robin tournament, which will be played over nine rounds in classical format across Masters and Challengers segments.*—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@CPJ MENA

Son Heung-min lands at LA FC with plans for trophies

LOS ANGELES, 7 AUG

Son Heung-min made his first visit to Los Angeles seven years ago during Tottenham's summer tour. He met with Los Angeles FC's Korean supporters club and even donned a sombrero from grateful Mexican fans thanking the South Korean forward for scoring a famous goal in the 2018 World Cup. Son planned another visit to Los Angeles and Las Vegas years ago, but he had to cancel the expensive trip after breaking his arm in a game. "I thought I might never come back to Los Angeles, but now I'm here," Son said with a laugh. Son knows he'll have plenty of time to enjoy the town this time around as he begins the next chapter of his groundbreaking career with LAFC.*—PTI*

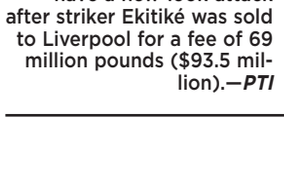


PHOTO: X/@DOAN

Frankfurt sign Japan winger Doan until 2030

FRANKFURT, 7 AUG

Eintracht Frankfurt has signed Japanese winger Ritsu Doan to strengthen a squad depleted by the sale of Hugo Ekitiké as it prepares to return to the Champions League. Doan joins on a five-year contract from fellow German club Freiburg, where he was the top scorer with 10 goals as the team placed fifth in the Bundesliga. "I'm very happy and honored to be here," Doan said in a translated video message to Frankfurt fans. "I can't wait to play in front of the supporters." Frankfurt is heading back to the Champions League this season after a third-place Bundesliga finish, but will have a new-look attack after striker Ekitiké was sold to Liverpool for a fee of 69 million pounds ($93.5 million).*—PTI*

BCCI invites applications for coaching positions

Bowling coach Cooley is leaving after an extended run

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

With the old guard, including celebrated bowling coach **Troy Cooley**, set to bid adieu, the BCCI's Centre of Excellence here is gearing up for a major overhaul of its coaching staff, and applications have been invited for leading positions in bowling, batting, and sports science and medicine departments.

Cooley, a former Australian First-Class bowler and an Ashes-winning bowling coach with England, has completed his three-year contract with the BCCI and was working on an extension. The 59-year-old was appointed NCA's bowling coach in late 2021.

Among his replacements could be former India seamer VRV Singh, who has worked under Cooley. The Centre of Excellence (COE), which was previously called the National Cricket Academy, was inaugurated in February this year.

Several posts have fallen vacant following the exit of staff members, including the medical team head, Nitin Patel. Patel had resigned from his position in March after being in the role for nearly three years. Spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule had also quit and joined the Rajasthan Royals as their support staff. Another NCA coach, Sitanshu Kotak, has joined the national team permanently. It was reported by PTI that former India cricketer VVS Laxman's tenure as head of COE is set to expire by the end of this year, and he is unlikely to seek an extension.

However, there is a possibility that he might be asked to carry on till the 2027 ODI World Cup. While advertising for the three key positions on Thursday, the BCCI said that the applicants for the post of batting and bowling coach at the COE's resident faculty must be former first-class or international cricketers with a BCCI Level-2 or Level-3 coaching certificate.

"These roles are integral to enhancing India's cricketing framework across coaching, education, and sports science domains," the board said.

A minimum of five years of coaching experience at the state or elite youth level is required for the batting coach's position, while a bowling coach will need to have a similar experience with any elite team. *—PTI*

Gill to lead North Zone in Duleep Trophy

Indian Test skipper Shubman Gill was on Thursday named captain of the North Zone squad for the upcoming Duleep Trophy, beginning 28 August.Gill, who scored a remarkable 754 runs in the five-Test series the second-highest ever by an Indian in a single series after Sunil Gavaskar's 774 in 1971 is expected to play in North Zone's opening clash against East Zone before leaving if picked in India's squad for the Asia Cup.India begins their campaign against the UAE on 10 September

'I SAID SORRY'

Chris Woakes reveals Rishabh Pant's voice note

LONDON, 7 AUG

England all-rounder Chris Woakes has revealed that he said "sorry" to Rishabh Pant for the delivery that broke his toe during the recent Test series on Thursday at the end of which he was left quite touched by his Indian rival's generosity.

Woakes had struck Pant's foot during the fourth Test in Manchester, ruling him out of the series-deciding fifth game. India battled past the setback to win the finale at the Oval by six runs to tie the series at 2-2.

Both Woakes and Pant became symbols of heroism for their respective teams by coming out to bat despite major injuries. While Pant padded up with his broken toe in Manchester, Woakes came out during the fifth Test despite a dislocated shoulder. "I saw Rishabh (Pant) had put an image of me on Instagram with a salute emoji, so I replied thanking him: 'Appreciate the love and hope the foot is OK,' etc," Woakes recalled in an interview to 'The Guardian'.

"He then sent me a voice note saying: 'I hope all is OK, good luck with the recovery, and I hope we meet again out there some day'. I said sorry for the broken foot."

Woakes also recalled being appreciated by India captain Shubman Gill for coming out to bat in the fifth Test. Woakes did not get to face a ball but said running between the wickets was tough. "(India captain) Shubman (Gill) said something like: 'That was incredibly brave'," he said. "I told him: 'You've had an unbelievable series, well played, and credit to your team'. Both sets of players had been through the mill in the series and deserve credit for the show we put on. Both teams wanted the win, of course, but it does feel fair that it was drawn."*—PTI*

Konstas, McSweeney named in Australia A squad

Nathan McSweeney and Sam Konstas will go head-to-head in India PHOTO: PTI

SYDNEY, 7 AUG

Promising Australian openers Sam Konstas and Nathan McSweeney, who made their debut against India in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy earlier this year, were on Thursday named in the 'A' squad that will play two four-day matches against India's A side in Lucknow next month.

Konstas had replaced McSweeney during the last India-Australia series Down Under but failed to nail his spot at the top of the order. He endured a disappointing outing in the Caribbean even as his side thoroughly dominated the West Indies.

The 19-year-old Konstas is the only current Test player to be named in the 'A' side, while the other capped players include McSweeney, Cooper Connolly, and spinner Todd Murphy.

Konstas had made quite an impression on his debut in the Melbourne Test, scoring an aggressive half-century and getting shoulder-barged by Indian superstar Virat Kohli. He later got into verbal spats with other Indian players as well, but he could not live up to the early promise.

He was sent back from a two-Test series against Sri Lanka to play in the Sheffield Shield after failing to find a place in the playing XI. *—PTI*

Karen outlasts Zverev to reach final

TORONTO, 7 AUG

Eleventh-seeded Karen Khachanov of Russia outlasted top-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (4) to reach the National Bank Open final.

"Today was a real close one," Khachanov said. "I was match-point down; if the ball touches the net and drops over, we wouldn't be talking now."

The 29-year-old Khachanov, a seven-time winner on the ATP Tour, will face the winner of the all-American second semifinal between second-seeded Taylor Fritz and fourth-seeded Ben Shelton. "I had to dig deep and lift my level," Khachanov said. "It was a very demanding, very mental, very physical match. So I'm very happy to get the win after losing some easy ones to him in recent years."

Mboko reaches National Bank Open final

A saved match point. Two breaks while her opponent served for the win. A fearless comeback from a set down against a Grand Slam champion. Victoria Mboko's historic climb reached new heights in an instant classic on Thursday.

The teenage sensation is heading to the National Bank Open's final after an epic, nail-biting turnaround to defeat Elena Rybakina 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (4), the latest chapter in a coming-out party that has captivated fans across Canada.

Mboko dropped her head into her palms in disbelief after Rybakina struck a forehand long on match point as an electric sold-out crowd lined with "Allez Vicky" signs for Canada's newest tennis star. *—PTI*

WFI suspends 11 wrestlers for submitting fake birth certificates

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has suspended 11 grapplers for submitting fake birth certificates after the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) verified 110 such documents and maintained that there was no lapse on its part, as 95 delayed registrations were done only on the orders of the SDM.

The sport of wrestling has been grappling with two major issues: Overage wrestlers competing in lower age-group competitions and many trying to represent a state different from their domicile after procuring fake birth certificates.

In some cases, the certificates have been issued as late as 12-15 years after the birth of the child.

Suspecting foul play, WFI provided the MCD with a list of certificates for verification.The MCD, upon verification, replied to WFI that it indeed issued birth certificates but maintained that the delayed registration (registration after one year of birth) is not done directly by it but under the orders of the SDM.In several competitions, especially at the trials to pick the national junior teams. *—PTI*

Manpreet all set for Asian Games 2026

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Two Olympic medals, over 400 International caps, and still going strong, Manpreet Singh, the second-most capped player in Indian hockey, has found a second wind by tweaking his lifestyle and diet.

The former India captain, who led India to a historic bronze at the Tokyo Olympics, realised after the Paris Games last year that staying relevant in the fast-paced world of modern hockey meant one thing: transforming his fitness.

My first target is the Asian Games 2026. I know that I can continue till then with my current fitness.

He has cut down on sweets and junk food, shifted to a high-protein, low-carb diet, and incorporated specialised workouts focused on speed and core strength."I have almost stopped eating sweets and junk food. I eat that only once a week, but in very small quantities. Apart from the gym, I started working on core workouts, speed, and lost seven kilos of weight," added the veteran from Mithapur, Punja, who made his debut for India in 2011 at the age of 19."With less weight, the speed on the field improved. I also got very good results in Yoyo and speed tests. I am feeling very good about myself. *—PTI*

Whitecaps sign Munich star Thomas Muller

VANCOUVER, 7 AUG

Former Bayern Munich forward Thomas Müller is joining the Vancouver Whitecaps in arguably the biggest signing in club history.

Müller, who won the World Cup with Germany in 2014, will join the Whitecaps for the remainder of the season in an open roster spot.

Terms of the deal were not released. It includes a Designated Player option for 2026.

"Whitecaps, let's make history," Müller said in a video he posted online Wednesday that showed him unboxing a Vancouver jersey. *—PTI*

'GENDER-DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR'

Lovlina accuses BFI official of disrespect

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Tokyo Olympics bronze-winning boxer Lovlina Borgohain's allegations of "disrespectful and gender-discriminatory behaviour" against the national federation's executive director Col Arun Malik are being investigated, and a report would be submitted soon, a Sports Authority of India (SAI) official has said. In a formal complaint addressed to Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Sports Authority of India (SAI) Director General, the TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) division, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), and the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), Lovlina alleged that Malik humiliated her and undermined her achievements during a Zoom meeting on July 8, which was attended by SAI and TOPS officials. On the call, Lovlina requested that her coach, who was also present in the online meeting, be allowed in the national camp, something that goes against the BFI policy. She also wanted the coach to be allowed to travel with her to train in Europe.

According to Lovlina, Malik responded aggressively and spoke to her in a demeaning manner.

"He blatantly told me to 'shut up, lower your head and do as we say.' His words were not only disrespectful but also carried an alarming tone of gender-discriminatory and authoritarian dominance -- something that no one, especially a woman who has brought honour to the nation, should be subjected to," Lovlina stated in her complaint. "I was made to feel small, unheard, and powerless. It was not just a personal insult it was an attack on every woman athlete who dreams of standing tall, both in and outside the ring," Lovlina stated in her complaint. *—PTI*